CATECHISM LESSONS ON VOCATION

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By Plockhorst

Suffer Little Children to Come Unto Me

"The harvest, indeed, is great, but the laborers are few. Pray, ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that He send laborers into His harvest." (Luke, x, 2.)

Catechism Lessons

ON

VOCATION

BROTHER AUGUST, F. S. C.

WITH INTRODUCTION

BY

The Most Reverend Patrick J. Hayes, D. D.,

Archbishop of New York

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INTRODUCTION

By

THE MOST REVEREND PATRICK J. HAYES, D. D.
Archbishop of New York

"Neglect Not the Grace That Is in Thee"

(I TIM., iv, 14).

This is a very timely and practical presentation on the subject of vocations. It comes from the pen of one whose long life has been hidden in Christ and with Christ and for Christ, and only seen by men while training the mind of youth in secular science and the soul of youth in piety and love of God. Both ripe experience and spiritual wisdom speak clearly and simply on vocation in this volume. Secular vocation, as well as priestly and religious, is dealt with in a most sensible way.

Teachers of the young will find guidance, inspiration and help in the knowledge of principle and of method in handling the delicate subject of vocation with their pupils.

Something should be done—and immediately—to put before boys and girls the call of Christ to the altar and the convent. The Church stands in urgent need of such service. Especially are postulants needed for the teaching brotherhoods and sisterhoods. The very existence of our Catholic schools, not to speak of their efficiency, depends upon an increase of vocations to the religious life.

There is no doubt that the world has recently allured the youth of both sexes, by reason of easy positions and large wages, to try their fortune in secular life. The portion Christ holds out to them, for the time being, at least, has little or no attraction.

St. Francis of Assisi, meeting Friar Giles, said: "Dearest Brother, God hath wrought in thee a very great grace. If the emperor came to Assisi, and would make one of the men of this city his knight, or private chamberlain, ought he not to rejoice greatly? How much greater joy oughtest thou to receive, in that God hath chosen thee for His knight and most beloved servant, to observe the perfect way of the holy gospel? Therefore, be steadfast and constant in the vocation whereto God hath called thee."

May the Divine Master bless this useful book, on its mission of calling laborers into the Vineyard, rich in harvest and already adorned with many priests and religious who, under Heaven, owe their Vocation to the Brothers of the Christian Schools. None is more deeply grateful to these devoted servants of God than their old-time pupil and present shepherd—the Fifth Archbishop of New York.

✠ Patrick J. Hayes.

Feast of St. Timothy,
Nineteen Hundred Twenty.

FOSTERING VOCATIONS

"States of life are freely chosen; and, at the same time, providentially given by God" (Rev. A. Vermeersch, S. J.). In this statement we have a fundamental principle by which to be guided in selecting a vocation. Each one is free to choose as he wishes; but God assists in the choice. And it is truly wonderful how insignificant at times and how varied are the means by which Providence starts the growth of vocations. At one time it is a word or a sentence accidentally dropped during a conversation; at another it is a text of Scripture or a sermon, or a lesson in catechism. Then again it may be an accident or some failure in life, which creates a disgust for the world. A little boy meets a Brother smiling and immediately he gets the idea that he would like to be a Brother too. A young man observes some religious at recreation. He sees their friendly deportment and hears their joyous laughter. He concludes they must be very happy; and he would become one of them. And thus it is, from the wonderful conversion of St. Paul to the gentle whisper of Our Lord to some little child after Holy Communion,—a beneficent Providence ordering all things sweetly for the happiness of man.

But, among the ordinary means, none is so fruitful as the advice and the example of a true friend. Hence the great influence of the religious teacher

in sowing and cultivating the germ of a vocation to the religious life or the priesthood. When that teacher is all that his garb implies; his every word and act exert a wonderful influence for good. He becomes the ideal of his pupils' aspirations.

Many teachers, however, fail to realize their power in this respect. Through false timidity, mistaken views, or lack of zeal, they are not so efficient as might be expected. Owing to peculiar traits of character or want of opportunity, some, indeed, may be excused from actively participating in this great work. But even they can and ought to contribute their share by fervent prayers for the success of the others. As is well known the success of many great preachers and teachers is to be attributed more to the prayers of some humble religious than to their own efforts.

Is it wrong to persuade others to embrace the higher life? Some say it is, imagining that there is danger of marring the future happiness of the subject, or of even interfering with the designs of God. This impression is due to the erroneous idea of Vocation prevailing in the past. According to that opinion vocation is solely the work of God, manifesting itself in a strong interior attraction to the priesthood or the religious life. But a late decree of the Church has condemned this error. Vocation consists in a right intention, fitness of nature and grace, and acceptance by a lawful superior. Rev. John B. Delauney, C. S. C., in a recent lecture to the Sisters of Mercy on

Vocation, defines the Catholic teacher's role as follows: "This pronouncement of the Holy See implies that the Catholic educator does not decide whether the pupil is called to the priesthood or the religious life, but whether the same pupil possesses the qualities which, if carefully cultivated, will make him worthy to receive that Vocation." It is then the pupil himself who, aided by God's grace, selects the Vocation according to the conditions given above. It is the part of the teacher to instruct and advise.

St. Thomas assures the doubtful thus: "Those who induce others to enter religion, not only commit no sin, but even merit a great reward."

St. Augustine says: "With God's grace I have embraced the perfection of the evangelical counsels: with all the power I have, I exhort others to do the same."

And such is the teaching of the great doctors and theologians of the Church. They all consider it a pious and meritorious act to encourage others to enter religion. Consequently, there need be no fear of doing wrong or impairing the future happiness of the young by prudently and truthfully fostering vocations.

The work of recruiting is, likewise, often neglected through fear that the subject will not persevere. It is certainly discouraging to see one's recruits after a short time abandon the service which they had embraced with such promise. But these defections are not the fault of the counsellor. As long as he honestly and candidly

did his part, he is not to blame. On the contrary, he ought to be consoled in the fact that God will amply reward his good intention and zeal.

The first means of attracting pupils or others to religion is a pleasing and joyful disposition. Youth is quick to recognize genuine happiness and naturally longs to participate therein. Pupils would be like their happy teachers. It behooves the religious teacher, therefore, to cultivate a genial and happy disposition. It is most important that he possess a sense of humor and a heart that can readily sympathize with the ways and doings of youth. A gloomy, morose, or peevish character is of little use in the classroom. He repels, instead of attracting souls to God. "We cannot shed happiness around us by wearing a countenance like a prison door" (Letters St. De La Salle).

A good teacher knows how "to smile through his tears." His heart may bleed; but his countenance shines. No physical or mental pain is allowed to interfere with his uniform good humor. Even the mistakes and the rudeness of some of his pupils, if there be any such, are always dealt with in a gentlemanly and dignified manner, and so as to appeal to their sense of right and wrong. The pupils understand that it is the duty of the teacher to correct their faults; and they generally receive the correction in the right spirit, when it is given in the right spirit. It is not such fatherly correction, but an unchristian display of anger and vindictiveness, that thwarts vocations.

Another means of securing subjects is to teach good catechism lessons on Vocation. According to our regulations these lessons follow a plan, or course, and thus give the pupils a true conception of the different states of life. The doctrine of the Church must be plainly and definitely stated. All vagueness of expression leading to doubt or equivocation is to be scrupulously avoided. The obligations and the advantages of each state are to be given clearly and exactly. Above all, the teacher cannot afford to exaggerate or belittle the merits of any order whatever. He must treat all fairly; and no matter how enthusiastic for the prosperity of his own, he is bound in conscience to exclude from his instructions and advice everything that might savor of bias one way or another. And when there is question of praising his own order, it is well to confirm his statements by quotations from the best authorities. He will lay stress on the fact that the young aspirant is to choose for himself, and that his decision should be founded on reason enlightened by the principles of faith. Such a one is not to consult merely his likes and dislikes; but he is to keep in view the glory of God and his own salvation, carefully examining whether he have, or can acquire, the qualifications necessary for the work of his choice.

During his instructions it is not sufficient for the religious teacher to impart the requisite information. He will be successful only in proportion as he causes the pupils to feel the nothingness

of earthly things, and the true worth of the spiritual. This he can do by simple reasonings and homely illustrations. Let him make frequent appeals to the gratitude and love which they owe to God; and show them that an efficacious means of proving their love consists in properly selecting their vocation. Then their young hearts will be touched and their wills moved to action.

Thirdly, the religious teacher, like the good shepherd, must know his flock. It is necessary for him to study the individual traits of his pupils. He must be constantly on the lookout for signs of certain virtues; such as love of prayer, generosity, nobility of mind, and purity of heart. These and other virtues that go to make the religious life or adorn the priesthood, may be very profitably dwelt upon during the religious instruction.

Rev. Brother Denis, F. S. C., of the Normal Institute at Ammendale, Md., gives the following qualities as indicating probable candidates for the religious life or the priesthood. Pupils who are docile, of a sociable disposition, of a sound mind, calm, deliberate, not nervous or scrupulous, happy, joyful, gentle and kind to their companions, and obedient to their parents—these are good subjects (Ecclesiastical Review, May and June, 1915).

Cardinal Wiseman speaks thus: "If one sees the youthful aspirants in their religious institutes, novitiates, here or abroad, in recreation or at study, he may easily decide who will persevere,

by a very simple rule. The joyous faces and the sparkling eyes denote the future monks far more surely than the demure looks and stolen glances" (Recollections of the Last Four Popes, p. 39).

Among the most promising are those pupils who are actuated by a laudable ambition and high ideals. They are to be warned and guarded against the false ideals of the world. And their footsteps are to be tenderly but surely guided up the mountain heights of the Gospel. Their aspirations are to be fed on the best. It does not take long for such souls to see the beauty and the grandeur of the religious life, the glory of the priesthood or the nobility of the work of the religious teacher. And what they admire they are led to investigate and to imitate. But they are timid and reluctant to seek advice. They have their doubts and are beset with difficulties both real and imaginary. This is the opportune moment for the teacher to exert his influence. He should approach the subject with his young aspirant gently and patiently. Without encroaching on the province of the confessor, let him carefully examine all doubts and difficulties; and suggest ways and means for their speedy removal. Furthermore, let him recommend, and join his pupil in earnest prayer, frequent communion, and devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin, as very efficacious means of success.

Then, having ascertained that the pupil has given due consideration to the joys and the possible trials, the obligations and the advantages of

the higher life, the teacher, in imitation of Our dear Lord, presents to his disciple a loving invitation to take up the cross and follow Jesus. But, like Jesus, he neither commands nor threatens; he simply invites and encourages.

The pupil soon feels that he has found a true friend, one who is capable and willing to assist him in selecting his state of life. And henceforth he places implicit faith and confidence in every word and act of his teacher. Vocations thus fostered are generally abiding.

It goes without saying that our Brothers are strongly attached to the Institute and are most anxious for its welfare. In season and out of season they devote all their energies, their very lives to the great object of the Society. They are martyrs to the cause of Christian education. Why then is it that they do not attract a greater number of new members?

Besides the objections and the obstacles already mentioned, it is the general opinion of those who have studied the question, that our Brothers are so absorbed in their immediate occupation of teaching that they do not give sufficient thought to the importance of recruiting. Some are under the impression that it is the business of the recruiter, that he alone is responsible, and that he has the grace of state. Well, we all have the grace of state; and we all of us are under bonds to the Institute. Besides, the official recruiter can accomplish little unless assisted by the teachers. But the teachers themselves, each in his own

class, may become most successful recruiters. In the history of the Society we find that those Brothers who were most noted for getting postulants, generally confined their efforts to their own pupils. We read that the Most Hon. Brother Philip, while teaching at Auray, in six years, had twenty-three of his pupils become priests or religious. The saintly Brother Benildus, likewise, could count many of his disciples who, following his advice and example, embraced the higher life. In 1889, besides ecclesiastical vocations and vocations for other religious institutes, there were two hundred and forty-five Brothers of the Christian Schools from the township of Saugues, the majority of whom had been his pupils. In general, our brothers in America have had a similar experience. Not to mention archbishops, bishops and priests, many of our own best religious and expert teachers gladly attribute their Vocation to the zeal and devotedness of the Brothers who taught them.

The remedy, consequently, for a dearth of subjects is easily found. Serious and frequent meditation on the motives for fostering vocations will surely prove efficacious. It is impossible for a Brother, imbued as he is with the knowledge and love of God, to view with indifference the countless souls that are lost for want of Christian teachers. When he thinks that it is within his power to save many of these souls by procuring subjects for the Institute, will he not be moved to make every effort for that purpose? No ob-

stacles can withstand the zeal of such a Brother; he knows the value of souls.

Then again, gratitude to the Institute for the many blessings both temporal and spiritual which every brother enjoys, will prove another powerful motive. A true Brother does not take things for granted. He does not act as though he held a mortgage on heaven, or as if he were the chief corner stone of his Society. He frequently recalls the past and compares his present condition with what he might have been. That thought makes him realize that, after God, he is deeply indebted to the Institute, and that he is bound, in honor and justice, to promote the prosperity of this good mother as far as he is able. And that is why the grateful Brother never tires in his efforts to procure new subjects.

Lastly, every true Brother naturally desires to see his order prosper and to have it perpetuated; to have the good work that he loves so well, advance and spread afar, long after his own labors are finished. What happiness, therefore, in old age and at death to know that we have trained successors who are able and ready to "take up the book which has fallen from our hands," valiant disciples who will continue the good fight where we left off. Yes; it is worth while and a great consolation, to feel, like our holy Founder, that through our efforts in recruiting, many souls will follow us to heaven, and add to our merit for all eternity.

It has been the aim of this short essay on "Fostering Vocations" to briefly answer the ob-

jections, to state the means, and to present the motives for an increased activity on the part of our Brothers, in recruiting new members. The essay is considered both timely and practical. For many reasons there never was a time when the Institute was more in need of subjects; or when it was more necessary to employ the most practical measures in securing them. But when all has been said, when argument has been irresistible, even when every one feels that something should be done, there may still be something wanting; and that something may be enthusiasm. Healthy enthusiasm is the great motive-power that produces grand results. It is entirely opposed to all easy-going routine of daily obligations. It absorbs the mind and the heart of an individual to such an extent that he has but one object in life, and that object he pursues with all the energy that is in him. Sufficient for the law, is not sufficient for the enthusiastic religious. A Brother possessed of enthusiasm will do great things for God and his congregation. The only limitation to his zeal will be his love for Our dear Lord and His little ones. On the other hand, a Brother entirely bereft of enthusiasm would accomplish but little. He would, in fact, gradually become a fit subject for the wood-pile of barren fig trees.

PRAYER FOR POSTULANTS

"O Mary, Queen of Apostles, conceived without sin, pray the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into His harvest!"

SUGGESTIONS TO THE TEACHER

This little book is intended to assist our Brothers in teaching catechism on Vocation. But it is not a text-book for the pupils, or a book to be merely read during the catechism lesson. Selected paragraphs may, indeed, be read with profit; but the reading should be accompanied by suitable comment. If he consider it advisable, the teacher might dictate certain definitions and principles and have the pupils memorize them; but only after a thorough explanation of each.

The lessons supply ready and ample matter on the important subject of Vocation, and they have been prepared according to the expository method of teaching catechism, as given in our "Elements of Pedagogy" and "The Catechist's Manual." Although the method is supposed to be followed, still it would be unwise for a Brother to give these lessons just as here presented. He ought to assimilate the matter and give it a personal presentation. The teacher's personality, after all, makes the lesson, especially in catechism.

If some of the lessons be considered too long, they can be shortened by condensing the expositions or reflections, or by omitting some things of lesser importance. It might be better, however, to divide the lesson into parts as indicated, and to use two catechism periods instead of one.

Thus divided, there will be sufficient matter for twenty-four lessons. Besides, the more im-

portant lessons will stand repetition; and towards the end of the scholastic year, there should be reviews each consisting of a synopsis of several lessons. All such changes and arrangements will, of course, depend on the actual conditions of the pupils. The lesson on the "Married Life" and the one on the "Lay Apostleship" are, in general, to be reserved for High School and College classes.

The memory questions ought never to be omitted. Every exposition must be followed by some appropriate questions in order to secure better attention and the remembrance of the matter explained. They need not be exhaustive or follow any particular order. It is sufficient that they serve to recall a few important points of the preceding exposition. There should also be subquestions on the meaning of words, phrases, sentences, etc.

The reflections must be made with all the care and attention that their importance demands. "The end of Catechism," said Pope Pius X, "is the amendment of life." And it is by the reflections that the teacher moves the will of the pupil to act, to do something; in this case, to act in regard to his vocation. As to the number and the time of making these reflections, there can be no fixed rule. Good judgment and the nature of the subject will decide. Two or three during a lesson, made with unction, may suffice.

The story at the end is merely suggestive. If the teacher know a better one, well and good; let

him use it. A story related during the lesson must be short, otherwise the instruction proper has to be curtailed.

In explaining the nature of Vocation as given in Lesson No. 2, the teacher is to be most careful not to change the doctrine. While adapting his language to the capacity of his pupils, he is bound to make sure by means of questions, or otherwise, that they are learning the exact teaching of the Church. In telling them, for instance, that Vocation is a counsel or an invitation, and not a command, he must see that they do not get the idea that there is little or no responsibility attached to the selection of a state of life. Again, as a substitute for the old motive of fear, the teacher ought to insist on love, and to present the heroism of working for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, as the grand ideal of life.

The expression of the teacher, it is true, should be varied; but, for good effect, the short sentence is to be preferred to the long. Whatever is said, ought to be said clearly and briefly.

When addressing the pupils directly, especially during the reflections, the expressions, "boys," "dear boys," and "my dear boys," may often be used with great advantage. They tend to create that feeling of sympathy between the teacher and the pupils, which is so necessary to produce the best results. The repetition of important phrases or sentences for the sake of emphasis, the change from the past to the present tense in description, the occasional use of the interrogative sentence

instead of the declarative, the oratorical pause, and other devices of language, will also prove helpful in arousing interest and making a lasting impression.

To illustrate the lesson the teacher may prudently draw upon his own experience and reading. He might also make use of pictures, diagrams, charts, and a blackboard synopsis of each lesson. Every graduating class should be provided with a few of the best books on Vocation, like "What shall I be?" by Rev. Father Cassilly, S. J., and "The Christian States of Life and Vocation," by Rev. J. Berthier. Such books might be lent to the pupils, or a suitable portion of their contents included in the lesson of the day.

In a word, the zealous teacher will make use of every available means to make the pupils realize that a lesson in catechism, especially on Vocation, is not a lesson in cube root.

LESSON I

THE LAST END

PART I

INTRODUCTION

Emerson, one of our great American writers, in one of his lectures, asks what he calls the two wonderful questions,—"What are we?" and "Whither do we tend?" After representing men as drifting aimlessly on the sea of life, he concludes in despair that we cannot answer these questions, neither we ourselves nor those who are supposed to be our guides. Alas! poor Emerson! It is said that he tried every religious belief except the Catholic. The only religion that could answer his questions he seemed to ignore.

EXPOSITION

Yes, boys; we Catholics can answer these questions. We know that we are creatures of God, and that He created us for a particular end. God made us and He made us that we might know Him, love Him, and serve Him in this world, and be happy with Him forever in the next. That is the great end of our existence.

First, God made us to know Him and He gives us the means to know Him. That is why you are here today. That is why you attend a Catholic school and why you study catechism.

Secondly, He wishes us to love Him. He loves us with an infinite love. It was for that reason He created us in preference to so many others who might have served Him better. Look at the crucifix and see how much He has loved us. In return He asks only our love. "My son, give Me thy heart" (Prov., xxiii, 26). What a touching appeal to our gratitude! He calls each one of us His son; and He asks that we treat Him as our loving Father. But He wishes us to prove our love by serving Him faithfully. Besides, He has made this service the condition on which we are to be happy with Him forever in the next world. It is true that He has given us free will. We may serve Him or not, as we choose. But our eternal happiness or misery depends on our choice.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. What were Emerson's two great questions?
2. To what did he compare man's condition in this life?
3. What was his conclusion regarding these two questions?
4. What was Emerson's religion?
5. How did he regard the Catholic religion?
6. Can Catholics answer these questions?
7. What are we?
8. Whither do we tend?
9. Why did God make us?
10. What does God ask in return for having created us?

11. Are we free to serve Him, or not to serve Him?

12. What depends on our choice?

EXPOSITION

If we examine how men live, we shall find that there are few who earnestly consider why God made them. Most men are busy about everything except the one thing necessary. They seek the honors of life; they run after riches; and they try to satisfy their desires in the pleasures of sense. Even Catholics, at times, seem to forget their last end. The four great truths, death, judgment, heaven, and hell are often placed in the background, to be recalled during a mission or in a dangerous sickness. Is it astonishing then, that many lead sinful lives, neglect the sacraments, prayer, and the Christian virtues? "In all thy works remember thy last end," says the Holy Ghost, "and thou shalt never sin" (Eccles., vii, 40). How few there are that do so!

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. Do the majority of men realize why God made them? How do we know that they do not?

2. How are they occupied?

3. What kind of life do they lead as a consequence?

4. What four great truths do they ignore?

5. What means of salvation do some Catholics neglect?

6. What does the Holy Ghost recommend regarding our last end?

REFLECTION

Well, boys; how is it with you? Do you seriously think of the four last things? How often do you say to yourself: I shall one day die, I shall then be judged, and rewarded or punished according to my works. Am I ready for death? We all know that we shall die. When we shall die, where we shall die, or how we shall die, we know not. But we are sure that we shall die. "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return" (Gen., iii, 19). Only a fool will deny that he shall die. The great question, therefore, is: "Am I ready for death?" "What must I do to be always ready?" You know the answer, boys. Always keep in the state of grace; and you will always be ready for death. The one great thought of your life should be how to die well. Like the saints and the martyrs, you should care little about what happens to you here on earth provided you attain your end. If you gain heaven, all is gained; if you lose it, all is lost, and that for eternity. Where am I going to spend my eternity? O terrible thought! And yet we must face it sooner or later. St. Teresa tells us that it is well to go down in spirit into hell during life, that we may not go there after death. And St. Augustine calls on God to cut, burn and punish him in this life, but to spare him in the life to come.

EXPOSITION

There is one great illusion by which the devil endeavors to lead young folks astray. "You are young," he says, "you have plenty of time to prepare for death. The pleasures of life are sweet. Why not enjoy them while you can? The majority seek honors, riches and pleasures; why should you be an exception? Besides, it is not necessary to commit mortal sin in order to enjoy life. Go to church on Sunday and all will be well. . . ."

Such, my dear boys, is the language of the devil and worldly companions in their effort to make you forget your last end. Be not deceived. Young people die as well as the old. And to attain salvation something more is required than occupying a front seat in church on Sunday. Neither do the goods of this life satisfy the heart of man. Solomon enjoyed them to his fill. He possessed extraordinary wisdom and knowledge; he was highly honored; and he enjoyed all the riches and pleasures of earth. And yet he left mankind in doubt as to whether he went to heaven or hell. The great lesson of his life is expressed in these words: "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity besides loving God, and serving Him alone" (Imitation of Christ).

St. Augustine also tried to satisfy his heart with earthly pleasures; but he tells us that the heart of man is made for God, and that nothing less than God can satisfy it. "My heart was

made for Thee, O God, and it will never rest till it rests in Thee." Surely, boys; we can accept the experience of Solomon and St. Augustine.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. By what great illusion does the devil try to deceive young folks?

2. Give his argument.

3. Show its error.

4. How did Solomon testify to the vanity of riches, pleasures, etc.?

5. According to St. Augustine, what can satisfy the heart of man?

MEMORY GEMS

1. *"Son, give Me thy heart" (Prov., xxiii, 26).*

2. *"Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return" (Gen., iii, 19).*

3. *"Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity besides loving God, and serving Him alone" (Imitation of Christ).*

4. *"In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin" (Eccles., vii, 40).*

5. *"My heart was made for Thee, O God, and it will never rest till it rests in Thee" (St. Augustine).*

THE LAST END

PART II

EXPOSITION

Yes; if you wish to overcome the temptations of the devil, the world, and the flesh, you must frequently think of your last end. Often make a comparison between heaven and hell. Heaven! What is heaven? St. Paul tells us that it is impossible to describe it. God gave him a vision of it. But when he tried to tell what he had seen, all he could say was: "That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what things God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Cor., 11, 9). Still we know that in heaven there is perfect happiness. There is nothing on earth that can fully satisfy us. But in heaven our hearts shall be filled with never-ending joys. Our every wish shall be gratified. Infinite riches, the highest honors, and the sweetest pleasures shall be ours, ever new and lasting forever. Heaven means every good, every pleasure; in a word, everything that any one could desire. In heaven there will be no evil, no pain, no sickness, no death. Heaven is the absence of all evil and the possession of all good. But above all, heaven is the possession of God. There we shall see God, not through the veil of faith, but face to face, as He is. "We shall see Him as He is"

(I John, iii, 2). We shall then know how much He loves us, and why, without Him, we would be eternally miserable.

On the other hand, consider the pains of hell. As the joys of heaven cannot be described, neither can the pains of hell. However, we may form a faint picture of the evils of hell by thinking of the evils of earth. You have all been sick; and you have all felt some bodily pain. Some of you, perhaps, may have visited a hospital and noticed how many of the patients were afflicted with some loathsome disease. You have heard of accidents and murders; and have read of great battles in which many lives were lost. You are familiar with the history of the martyrs. From time to time you have heard of men, women and children being burnt alive. No doubt you were shocked by the very thought of such great suffering. But what are these sufferings when compared to those of eternity? If all the evils of life were added together and multiplied as often as there are stars in the firmament, known and unknown, they would be as nothing in comparison with the torments of hell. "Which of you," says the prophet, "can dwell with devouring fire?" (Isa., xxxiii, 14).

At times the sufferings of this life are terrible; but they have an end. Death brings relief to the sufferers. Yes; death, if it be good, is the angel of mercy to human miseries. But if it be bad, it simply changes temporal sufferings into eternal. In hell there is no cessation from suffering. If

the damned could only die, and thus end their torments! But no; they suffer forever. Hell is an existence filled with everlasting torments. Ever and never—ever to suffer and never to get relief.

That is the place prepared by God to punish the devil and his rebel angels, and to which men who die in mortal sin, are condemned forever.

After placing heaven and hell side by side, ask yourself the question, which shall be my place? I must go to one or the other. Which shall it be? Repeat that question very often, especially when tempted to sin.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. Mention a great means of overcoming temptation.

2. How may we compare heaven and hell?

3. After St. Paul's vision of heaven, what did he say of it?

4. Mention some of the good things found in heaven; some of the evils excluded.

5. What is the greatest joy in heaven?

6. What is the greatest pain in hell?

7. Mention another great torment of hell.

8. What does St. Teresa say on the thought of hell?

9. After comparing heaven and hell, what resolution should we naturally take?

10. Is it sufficient to resolve? What else is necessary?

REFLECTION

Let me ask you, boys, is it worth while to satisfy our passions here on earth, if, for doing so, we shall have to suffer forever in hell? St. Justin, one of the First Christians, said: "We wish for nothing so much as to suffer for Christ, that we may be preserved from hell and merit heaven." That was the great desire of all the saints. And were they not wise indeed in giving up the joys of this life for those of eternity? What they have done you can do. As St. Thomas told his sister, boys, "If you wish to save your soul, you have merely to will it." Neither the devil, nor the world, nor your passions, can cause you to lose your soul against your will. Those who are in hell are there through their own fault. For all eternity they will sadly lament that, having had it in their power to go to heaven, they did not do so. "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?" (Matt., xvi, 26).

EXPOSITION

To attain our end, we must keep the commandments. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," says Our Lord (Matt., xix,17). That is the general condition on which we may hope to escape hell and merit heaven. The commandments are the foundation of all service of God. But there is a higher service than the bare observance of the commandments.

It consists in embracing a higher state of perfection than that of the ordinary Christian in the world. Those who do so, receive special graces and enjoy special privileges which enable them to observe the commandments more perfectly. They serve God in some particular place and manner; and this particular service is called a person's state of life, or vocation. Those who only keep the commandments in the world, belong to the lowest, or common Christian state. God Himself, instituted these different states of life and He intends each person to serve Him in one of them, and, in that way, to attain his end. How important it is, therefore, for every one to find out the state of life in which he can most surely secure his salvation! And it is especially in youth that this knowledge must be obtained. The study of your vocation, therefore, boys, is most important. And to assist you in making this study I shall teach a catechism lesson every week or two, on vocation in general and in particular, and on the means of knowing one's vocation.

REVIEW

1. What is the Catholic answer to Emerson's questions?

2. What prevents the majority of men from thinking of their last end?

3. Give St. Augustine's opinion of earthly goods and pleasures.

4. What is St. Teresa's advice on hell?

5. What answer did St. Thomas give his sister when she asked him how she could save her soul?

6. In what does the higher service of God consist?

7. Are we bound to embrace it? Why not?

8. Who instituted the different states of life?

9. What then is the great question for young people to study?

STORY

St. Philip Neri and the ambitious young man.

FRUIT

Always remember your last end. "In all thy works think of thy last end and thou shalt never sin" (Eccles., vii, 40).

MEMORY GEMS

1. *"Which of you, says the prophet, can dwell with devouring fire?" (Isa., xxxiii, 14).*

2. *"What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?" (Matt., xvi, 26).*

3. *"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what things God hath prepared for them that love Him" (I Cor., ii, 9).*

4. *"If you wish to save your soul, you have merely to will it" (St. Thomas).*

SYNOPSIS

- The Last End
  - Introduction
    - Emerson's two questions.
    - Catholics can answer them.
  - Four Last Things.
    - Seldom thought of.
    - Preparation postponed.
    - Testimony of Solomon and St. Augustine.
  - Heaven and Hell.
    - Joys of Heaven.
    - Torments of Hell.
    - Which shall be mine?
  - Last End Attained.
    - Keeping the Commandments.
    - Fidelity to one's vocation.
  - Fruit:—Always remember your last end.

LESSON II

VOCATION IN GENERAL

PART I

INTRODUCTION

1. What was the subject of last Friday's catechism lesson?

2. What four great truths should we often call to mind? Why?

3. How does the devil try to prevent young people from thinking of their last end?

4. What great lesson can we learn from Solomon's life?

5. What did St. Thomas mean by the answer he gave his sister on how to save her soul?

6. What is the great question for young people regarding their life-work?

In the catechism on our last end, boys, you learned that there is only one thing really necessary in this world, and that is to save our soul. "But one thing is necessary" (Luke, x, 42). No matter who we are, or what we do, if we save our soul, all is saved; if we lose it, all is lost. That is why we ought to select the best means to save our soul and thus attain our last end. And that means is to follow our vocation.

EXPOSITION

There are many people in the world who do not believe in, or understand what is meant by

Vocation. They think that each one may choose the state in life which he likes best. They do not consider themselves responsible to any one for their choice. Whether they become a doctor or a lawyer, a merchant or a teacher, or a priest, or get married, is their own affair. Many are guided by the advice and example of their parents. Some are moved by ambition or love of riches, and select accordingly. So, through ignorance or passion, the subject of vocation is, by the greater number, either entirely ignored or misunderstood. Now, boys, this is a matter of grave importance. The invincibly ignorant may be excused; but for educated Catholics there can be no excuse. The Church teaches that there is such a thing as Vocation, and theologians tell us that God is pleased to have us serve Him in a certain special state of life, although He does not make it an absolute obligation to select that one in particular.

Again, the word, vocation, is sometimes used to designate a man's business. People speak of a vocation to a work or a profession, and of vocational training in the schools. But all that is meant by this use of the word, vocation, is the particular work by which a man makes a living. Our use of the word, vocation, means an invitation from God to serve Him in a special state. We also use it to indicate the work itself; as a vocation to preach, a vocation to teach. There are many callings in this life; but there are only three vocations properly so-called: viz., the secu-

lar priesthood, the religious life, and the married state. Some theologians name virginity as a fourth state.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. Do people in general understand the matter of vocation? Explain.
2. How do they regard the choice of their life-work?
3. By what are many influenced in making this choice?
4. How should Catholics consider their vocation?
5. What is the teaching of the Church regarding vocation?
6. What is the worldly meaning of the word vocation?
7. How does it differ from the Catholic meaning?
8. How many kinds of vocations are there?

EXPOSITION

The word, vocation, then, means a Divine call,* or an invitation to a certain state of life; in which state God intends us to become perfect and save

*In these Lessons the word, "call," is generally used as a synonym of invitation, or at the most, a pressing invitation, and not in the sense of command. It must further be understood that the word, "invitation," itself, is not to be taken in the same sense as in the Decree, page 47, viz.; "a certain interior aspiration of the subject, or invitation of the Holy Ghost." It means simply an opportunity, an offer, or a privilege, and not a special intervention of Providence.

our soul. God wishes us all to be perfect, perfect according to the state to which He has called us. "Be you perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt., v. 48). We are all called to become perfect; that is, to be saints. That sentence must not frighten you. There are different degrees of sanctity. Nor do all attain sanctity by performing the same works. Every good Catholic is on the way to be a saint. To be a saint all that is necessary is to keep in the state of grace, and aim at fulfilling our duties perfectly. No matter how humble our position in life, it is always possible to attain sanctity in it. We know this from the lives of the saints among whom we find every state and condition in life represented.

But according to the nature and the dignity of the state to which each person is invited, and the work expected of him therein, so is the degree of perfection to which he is called, or invited. The perfection expected of religious, for example, is higher than that expected from the ordinary Christian. Our Lord Himself makes the distinction in His answer to the young man who asked Him what he should do to gain eternal life. "Keep the commandments" (Matt., xix, 17), said Our Lord. When the young man replied that he had done so from his youth, Our Lord said to him: "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and come, follow me" (Matt., xix, 21). It was thus that Our Lord indicated the higher life of the evangelical coun-

sels, poverty, chastity, and obedience, and how the young man would thus become perfect and save his soul. While that young man found it too difficult to accept the invitation to give up his earthly goods for the poverty of Our Lord, nevertheless, there have been countless multitudes of generous souls who, in every age and clime, have accepted the invitation and have consecrated their lives to the higher works of religion. They constitute the grand army of the priesthood and the religious orders. They are the heroes of the Church and the special friends of Christ.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. How does God wish all to be perfect?
2. Give the text of Scripture showing that He wishes all to be perfect.
3. What is necessary to be a saint?
4. How is it possible for all to be saints?
5. Does God require the same degree of perfection from all? Explain.
6. When did Our Lord show this?
7. Relate the circumstances.
8. What particular state of life did Our Lord announce on this occasion?
9. Why did the young man not accept the invitation?
10. Who have accepted the invitation since?

EXPOSITION

Besides the religious state, there are, as stated above, three other states, or different kinds of vocation. They are the secular priesthood, the

state of virginity, and the married state. Hence there are four states of life in which men are invited to serve God. Under the guidance of Providence, the great majority select the married state. It is in the nature of things that it should be so. Not that they are debarred from the other states; but, while entirely free in making their selection, they believe that the married life is the most suitable for them. Virginity is a higher state than the married life. It is more pleasing to God. Those who belong to that state live in the world but abstain from marriage. Lastly, there is the holy priesthood. In dignity and power it is the most sublime of all states. Priests are the ambassadors of Christ and are duly appointed to represent Him in His dealings with the faithful.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. Name the kinds of vocation.
2. What state do the great majority of men enter?
3. Could they enter one of the other states if they wished? Why?
4. What is the state of virginity?
5. How does the priesthood compare with the other states?
6. What relation has the priest to the faithful?

REFLECTION

These, my dear boys, are the different states, or kinds of vocation. Every man and every woman is invited to some one or other of them.

There is no exception. God wishes that we all serve Him in a certain particular state, and that service will be the most pleasing to Him. Furthermore, God gives each one the necessary qualities and the helps to fulfill the duties of his particular state. In other words, a man is best qualified for the state that God would like him to select. Hence, the choice of a state of life is the most important of earthly affairs. And yet there are many misfits in this world. Many undertake to do what they are not qualified for, either by nature or grace; which fact accounts for much of the misery that we see around us. "How many youths," says Father Rossignoli, S. J., "born for great things, lose their time in trifles" (Choice of State of Life). St. Gregory Nazianzen says: "The choice of a state of life is the only foundation on which we can raise the edifice of a good or bad life."

You are just starting out in life, boys, and it is necessary that you should know the state to which God invites you. Some of you may ask, is it possible to know that state? I answer, yes; not only possible, but even easy through the grace of God. In the first place you must be very much in earnest; banish all likes and dislikes of the past. If you examine such likes and dislikes, you will probably find some worldly motive connected with them. Stand before God without preference, and pray to Him to direct you and make known His good pleasure. Then consider the different states, their nature, and the qualifications required for each. This you

cannot do now, but, as we advance in our course, you will better understand the obligations and the advantages of each kind of vocation.

EXPOSITION

Again, many young people will ask: "Are we obliged to accept the Divine invitation? Having free will, may we not choose for ourselves?" This, my dear boys, is the most serious matter connected with the whole subject of vocation. The buoyancy of youth, the deceitfulness and the strength of the passions, and the attractions of the world, all prompt a young person to select the state which is most agreeable to human nature. Consequently, there is often a conflict between nature and grace. "Nature has regard to temporal things; grace attends to things eternal" (Imitation of Christ).

Some of those who have written on the subject have misinterpreted the doctrine of the Church. They have fallen into two errors. In the first place, they assert that no one can enter the priesthood or the religious life without a special interior attraction. Secondly, they hold that when a person feels this attraction, he is bound to follow it under pain of endangering his salvation. But the best authorities pronounce these opinions erroneous. And a late decree of the Church says that for a vocation to the priesthood no interior aspiration of the subject or invitation of the Holy Ghost is necessary. (See Decree.) Father Cassilly, S. J., says ("What Shall I be?" p. 6), the decree may be applied to

the religious vocation as well as to the priesthood. So the true doctrine is that, for a vocation to the priesthood or the religious life, a special intervention of Providence is not necessary. All that is required is a right intention, physical and mental fitness, and acceptance by a lawful superior. Nor is one bound to accept the invitation under pain of sin. The teaching of St. Chrysostom, St. Thomas and St. Gregory Nazianzen and other great theologians is that, as a vocation is a free gift of counsel, it may be declined without sin. However, to decline to accept so great a favor as a vocation to the priesthood or the religious life, shows a want of love for God and spiritual things, and may expose one to sin.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. What is the most serious question connected with vocation?
2. To what state do most young people incline?
3. What influences usually prompt young people to select that state?
4. How do the promptings of nature differ from those of grace?
5. What two errors on the subject of vocation have some writers taught in the past?
6. Is a particular sign from God necessary for a vocation to the religious life or the priesthood? Explain.
7. Is a person bound to accept an invitation to either of these states under penalty of sin? Why not?

VOCATION IN GENERAL

PART II

EXPOSITION

The matter of vocation is so important, that it is necessary for all to get a clear conception of the doctrine of the Church on the subject. Hence, in his article on Vocation, in the Catholic Encyclopedia (Vol. xv, 1912), the Rev. A. Vermeersch, S. J., draws the following conclusions or fundamental principles:

1. "States of life are freely chosen, and, at the same time, providentially given by God."

COMMENTARY.—God does not interfere with man's free will even in the choice of a state of life. He gives him the graces and the qualities required for the state that He would like him to select, and the higher the state, the stronger are these indications; but there is no obligation to embrace that state. "The Fathers of the Church declare that the choice is free, without danger of incurring the loss of God's favor."

2. "For most men there is no Divine decree, logically anterior to their free actions, assigning them to this or that particular profession, or state of life."

COMMENTARY.—A Divine order or decree is usually given for some special work, and is accompanied by signs which cannot be mistaken. We have as examples, the call of Abraham, St.

Matthew, St. Paul, and some of the other great saints.

3. "The path of the evangelical counsels is, in itself, open to all, and preferable for all, without being directly or indirectly obligatory."

COMMENTARY.—No one is bound to practise the evangelical counsels, or to enter the religious life. Although this path is open to all, yet it is for each one to accept or to decline to enter thereon. There are some exceptions. First, when a person has made a vow to enter religion, he is bound to keep it, unless dispensed by proper authority. Secondly, when God gives a special call or order, one is bound to obey. Thirdly, when a person feels that it is very unlikely that he will be saved if he remain in the world, he is bound to become a religious.

On the other hand, one may be anxious to accept the invitation, but cannot prudently do so on account of certain traits of character or habits which render him unfit for the higher life.

Again, charity or justice may prevent one from entering religion; as the support of a relative or the payment of a debt.

4. "Vocation is not an affection or inward force which makes a man feel impelled to enter the religious state, or some other state of life.

"A strong liking for a state of life is not an infallible sign of a vocation. It may help in selecting a particular religious order; but it is not to decide whether one has a vocation or not."

COMMENTARY.—The young especially, must be on their guard against likes and dislikes in choosing their vocation. What they like may not be suitable for them; and they may have a natural dislike for the work of their true vocation. Priests and religious may find their work at times, difficult and distasteful. They make many sacrifices and suffer much. But they know that they are doing God's will, and that thought sweetens labor and even death itself.

5. "God does not determine for every man his state of life; neither does salvation chiefly depend on this choice of a state of life conformable to the Divine election."

COMMENTARY.—"God does not determine," i. e., by a Divine decree; but He does determine (or fix on) the state in which He wishes every man to serve Him. "Neither does salvation chiefly depend on this choice." No; not chiefly, but secondarily or remotely it may.

From all eternity God destines each person for a certain state in life. But, like predestination, that state cannot be known without a special revelation. In the execution of this design God makes use of secondary causes. And it is by means of these secondary causes that man ascertains his vocation, or the state in which God wishes him to serve Him. For example, besides the absence of impediments, the secondary causes, or conditions, for a vocation to the secular priesthood or the religious life, are: a right intention, fitness of nature and grace, and acceptance by a

lawful superior. So with these conditions, no one need fear to select the higher state of the secular priesthood or that of the religious life. In fact, to decline a vocation to either of these states, indicates, at least, a false humility or a want of generosity in the love of God.

Salvation does not, indeed, absolutely depend on the selection of a state of life; still the consequences of making a bad selection may be very serious. It is the opinion of theologians that by embracing his proper vocation, a man receives special graces which render it easier for him to attain salvation than if he selected some other state. This will, of course, depend on his sincerity, or his opposition to God's Holy Will. St. Cyprian speaks thus: "The assistance of the Holy Ghost is communicated to us according to the order and designs of God, and not according to our caprice."

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. According to the theologian, Vermeersch, what is the first principle regarding the subject of vocation?
2. What is meant by providentially given?
3. What is the second principle?
4. What do you mean by Divine decree?
5. Is such an order ever given? Why?
6. Give an example.
7. What is the third principle?
8. What is meant by saying that the Evangelical Counsels are open to all?

9. Is there any obligation to practise them, or to enter the religious life? Explain.

10. What is the fourth principle?

11. Is a strong liking a sure sign of a vocation? Why not?

12. How may such likes or dislikes prove useful?

13. What is the fifth principle of this theologian?

14. How does God make known a man's state of life?

15. Does a man's salvation absolutely depend upon his selection? How may it remotely?

16. What three conditions must accompany a true vocation?

EXPOSITION

In all God's dealings with man we find that His infinite love predominates over all His other perfections. The act of creation is a mystery of love. Our redemption is the sublimity of love. And even in the exercise of His justice, God manifests His love towards poor sinful man. In our worship and service, it is love, and not fear, that He calls for. He loveth the cheerful giver. Generosity attracts His love. Our Lord's invitation to the higher life is a special act of His love; and its acceptance must be a noble, generous act of love on the part of those invited. You have just heard that the invitation is a counsel and not a command. Hence those who are invited should feel highly honored and

grateful for so extraordinary a favor. For them the question should be, not must I accept, but rather may I accept? Having, after due consideration before God, and with a pure intention, answered this question, they should act with confidence, humbly adoring the Divine will in their regard, and feeling assured of all the helps necessary to attain the end in view, no matter how great and sublime it may be.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. Which of God's perfections predominates in His dealings with men?
2. Mention some great works of God's love.
3. What kind of worship does He prefer?
4. How may we consider Our Lord's invitation to the higher life?
5. How should it be accepted?
6. What question should those who are invited, ask themselves?
7. In what condition of mind should they examine this question?
8. When they honestly believe the answer agrees with God's wish, how should they act?
9. Why should difficulties not prevent them from accepting the invitation?

REFLECTION

Remember, my dear boys, that, if you are called or invited to one of the higher states, it is Our dear Lord who asks you to come and help Him in saving your own soul and those of others from hell. He does not oblige you to come. He simply invites you as a dear

friend. Can you refuse? You owe Him everything you have. What can the world give you in exchange for His love? Is it honor, riches, or pleasure? These things pass away with time and generally leave regret, if they do not endanger salvation. Our Lord says that it is very difficult for a rich man to enter heaven. And you have often heard that the easiest road to heaven is the religious life. Recall the story of St. Francis Xavier. "What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul?" That is the question that made Francis the great Apostle of the Indies. Again, recall that other story of the young man whom Our Lord invited to sell his earthly possessions and come, follow Him. Alas! the young man was too much attached to his earthly riches. He turned away sorrowful. He had declined a vocation offered by Our Lord Himself. How this refusal must have affected his after life! And Father Faber asks: "Is he looking now in heaven upon that Face from whose mild beauty he so sadly turned away on earth?" Supposing that he is in heaven, would any one of you boys be willing to accept his crown for that of St. Francis Xavier? or of St. De La Salle?

REVIEW

1. How do many people regard the subject of vocation?

2. State the invitation of Our Lord to the young man who asked what he should do to get to heaven.

3. What frequently causes the young to make a mistake in their choice?

4. Why is a person not bound to accept an invitation to the priesthood or to the religious life?

5. By what great motive should a person be persuaded to become a priest or a religious?

6. How is a vocation providentially given?

7. When is a person bound to enter the priesthood or the religious life?

STORY

Of St. Francis Xavier's Conversion, as alluded to on page 46.

FRUIT

Frequently ask God for the grace to choose well.

DECREE

July 2, 1912.

To the Rt. Rev. Charles M. A. DeCormont, Bishop of Aire, concerning the book entitled "La Vocation Sacerdotale," written by the Very Rev. Canon Joseph Lahitton of the same diocese.

Rt. Rev. Sir.—On account of the controversies that have arisen occasioned by the two works of Canon Joseph Lahitton on the priestly vocation, and because of the importance of the doctrinal question involved, our Holy Father, Pope Pius X, has deigned to appoint a special Commission of Cardinals.

This Commission, after a careful examination of the arguments on both sides, in its plenary assembly of the 20th of last June, gave the following judgment:

The book of the illustrious author, Canon Joseph Lahitton, entitled "La Vocation Sacerdotale," is in no way deserving of censure; moreover, for his statements that:

1. No one ever has any right to ordination before the free choice of the bishop. 2. The condition which ought to be regarded in the candidate for ordination and which is called a priestly vocation, by no means consists, at least, necessarily and ordinarily, in a certain interior aspiration of the subject or invitation of the Holy Ghost to enter the priesthood. 3. But on the contrary, in order that he may rightly be called by the bishop, nothing more in the candidate is required than a right intention together with a fitness placed in those gifts of nature and grace and confirmed by that probity of life and sufficiency of learning, which furnish a well-founded hope that he may be able to properly discharge the duties of the priesthood and holily fulfill its obligations; he is deserving of the highest praise.

In an audience of the 26th of June, His Holiness, Pius X, fully approved the decision of their Eminences, the Cardinals, and he instructs me to inform your Lordship that you may please communicate it to your subject, Canon Joseph Lahitton, and have it inserted in full in the Semaine Religieuse of the diocese.

I beg your Lordship to accept the assurance of my devotion in Our Lord.

R. Card. Merry del Val.

Rome, July 2, 1912.

SYNOPSIS

Vocation in General

- Introduction.
  - Questions on last lesson.
  - Means of salvation.
  - Definition.
- Kinds explained.
  - Married Life, Virginity.
  - Religious Life, Priesthood.
- Choice of State.
  - Importance.
  - Invitation, not a command.
- Principles of Doctrine.
  - Freedom of choice.
  - No Divine decree for most men.
  - Counsels not obligatory.
  - Vocation not an affection.
  - Salvation not chiefly dependent on selection.
- Necessary Conditions.
  - Right intention.
  - Fitness of nature and grace.
  - Acceptance by a lawful superior.

Fruit:—Frequently ask God, the Holy Ghost, to enlighten you on the question of your vocation.

LESSON III

THE PRIESTHOOD

PART I

INTRODUCTION

1. What was the subject of last Thursday's catechism lesson?

2. Give the text of Scripture showing that God wishes us all to be perfect.

3. Name the evangelical counsels.

4. Is it possible for each one to know his vocation?

5. How may a strong inclination for a particular vocation be utilized?

6. What great motive should actuate us in accepting a vocation to the higher life?

7. What spiritual deficiency is shown by those who decline a vocation to the higher life?

Time and time again you have heard, boys, that the priesthood is the most exalted of all the states of life. From your mother's knee you were taught to regard the priest as an extraordinary person. And as you grew in age and your faith became stronger and stronger, in like manner did your reverence for the dignity and the power of the priesthood become greater and greater, until today your idea of the character of a priest is identified with all that is noble and elevated. So elevated, in fact, may some of you

regard the priesthood that, if the thought of becoming a priest ever enter your mind, you banish it at once, as rash and presumptuous. Such a state of life, you think, is out of the question for you. Well, in today's lesson I propose to show you that many are wrong in this hasty decision.

EXPOSITION

In the catechism on vocation in general you heard that the invitation to embrace the secular priesthood or the religious life, is given to all those who have no impediment. It is not a question of whether or not you think you are good enough for so high a life. Great virtue is an excellent preparation, and always accompanies the life of a good priest; but it is not a necessary condition for entering the priesthood. You have merely to examine whether your intention be good, whether you be qualified, and whether you will be accepted by a lawful superior. It is the latter who decides whether you are qualified or not. Therefore do not decide too hastily that you have no vocation. With the given conditions you may become a priest if you wish.

And what is a priest? A priest is the "minister of Christ and the dispenser of the mysteries of God" (I Cor., iv, 1). He is, as it were, another Christ, doing what Christ Himself did. At the Consecration of the Mass he changes the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. He then offers, though in an unbloody manner, the same sacrifice that Christ offered

on Mt. Calvary. "Next to the Incarnation," says Cardinal Manning, "there is no action so transcendent, so purely divine, as the Consecration and the Holy Sacrifice" (The Eternal Priesthood). The priest also preaches the same Gospel that Christ preached. And, by administering the sacraments, he applies the merits of the Redemption to our souls.

To speak of the power and the dignity of the priesthood would require the eloquence of an angel; nay, no language can describe them. Just recall, my dear boys, some occasion on which you heard Holy Mass with extra fervor and devotion; when you were entirely absorbed in the great sacrifice being offered before you. At the solemn moment of the Consecration, when all are bowed down in deepest adoration, you hear the wonderful words, "This is My Body" and "This is My Blood." With the eyes of faith you then behold Christ Himself, upon the altar. It is no longer bread and wine, but the Son of God made man. That sanctuary, no matter how lowly, is now filled with the princes of heaven humbly adoring their Lord and Creator. As from the luminous cloud that enveloped Mt. Thabor, you hear that touching expression of eternal love: "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." With St. Peter, you are overwhelmed with awe and amazement. Yes; "It is good for us to be here" (Matt., xvii, 4), you whisper. It is good to assist at, and to participate in these Divine mysteries.

And who officiates at this wonderful sacrifice? It is the priest, the minister of Christ. It is he who pronounces the words at which Christ comes from heaven to become the victim on the altar. It is he who offers this victim to the Eternal Father for the intentions of the Church and those of the faithful. It is the priest who appeases the wrath of God angry on account of the sins of men. It is the priest who calls down the blessings of heaven upon the members of the Church both living and dead. It is through him that the faithful share in the fruits of the sacrifice and lovingly receive the Body and Blood of their Saviour. Can we imagine any greater power than this? And what dignity is to be compared with it? "Great is this mystery, and great the dignity of priests, to whom that is given which is not granted to angels" (Imitation of Christ). "If I were to meet an angel and a priest," said St. Francis of Assisi, "before the priest first would I bow." And St. Chrysostom expresses his appreciation of the holy sacrifice of the Mass and of the dignity of the priest, as follows: "When you behold the Lord immolated and lying on the altar, and the priest standing over the sacrifice, and praying, and all the people empurpled by that precious blood, do you imagine that you are still on earth amongst men, and not rather rapt up to heaven?"

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. How do Catholics regard the priestly state?
2. What mistake do young folks sometimes make when thinking of becoming a priest?
3. How does the priest represent Christ?
4. Why has Jesus Christ given priests such power?
5. Can we adequately describe the dignity and the power of the priesthood?
6. May any one aspire to the priesthood?
7. What conditions are requisite?
8. What wonderful power does the priest exercise at the Consecration of the Mass?
9. Mention some of the blessings obtained through the Mass.

REFLECTION

Yes, boys, the wonderful power and dignity of the priest are shown in the celebration of Holy Mass. How grateful we ought to be to Almighty God for instituting the priesthood and for allowing us to assist at this great sacrifice. "As often as we hear Mass," says The Imitation of Christ, "it ought to seem to us, as great, as new and as delightful, as if Christ that same day, first descending into the Virgin's womb, had been made man." Every Mass at which we assist, ought to be for us another Christmas. And if this ought to be the joy of those who only assist at Holy Mass, what must be the joy of him who celebrates it?

EXPOSITION

When Our Lord, before curing the man sick of the palsy, said: "Son, be of good heart, thy sins are forgiven thee," the Scribes were scandalized and accused Our Lord of blasphemy. "Who can forgive sins," they asked, "but God only?" To prove that He had power on earth to forgive sins, Christ told the sick man to arise, take up his bed and go into his house. And to the wonder of all the spectators, the sick man arose, took up his bed, and went into his house (Mark, ii, 7). (Matt., ix, 2-7.)

And who now have the power on earth to forgive sins? We Catholics readily answer: Christ said to His apostles: "Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven; and whose sins you shall retain they are retained" (John, xx, 23). This power has come down the ages to the successors of the Apostles, the bishops and priests of the Church. To every priest, at his ordination, is imparted the power to forgive sins. If on your way to confession a Protestant should ask why you confess your sins to a priest, you would promptly reply: "To get absolution." And if he would further ask why he could not get absolution from his minister, you would tell him that his minister has no power to forgive sins; that that power belongs only to the Catholic priest.

But, boys, have you ever thought of the wonderful change wrought by the priest when he

gives absolution? Let the soul of the sinner be as black as coal and his sins as red as scarlet; let that soul be steeped in every imaginable crime and vice; as soon as the priest pronounces the words of absolution, that soul, a child of the devil, if truly repentant, is transformed, as it were, into an angel of light, and is immediately restored to the friendship of God. "If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow; and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool" (Is., i, 18). If I ask any one of you, why it is that while before confession you are heavy of heart, sorrowful, and sad; and that after confession you feel light of heart, joyful and happy, you will answer, because you made a good confession. Yes; you made a good confession, and the priest forgave you your sins. It was the application of his power that changed your sorrow into joy.

The Holy Scripture says that our Blessed Lord went about doing good, and that he spoke with authority. The priest also goes about doing good and he speaks with authority, the authority of Christ Himself. "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth, shall be loosed also in heaven" (John, xx). (Matt., xxviii, xviii.)

From our entrance into life to our departure in death, the priest exercises his power as our

ministering angel. He admits us into the Church in baptism. In the trials and temptations of life he is our star of hope and consolation. By the sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist, which he administers, our souls are purified and preserved in the life of grace. And during our last moments he anoints us with the holy oil of Extreme Unction, and thus smoothes our passage to a happy eternity. Truly, the priest, like our Divine Lord, is a good shepherd, who has consecrated his life to our welfare. His works are wonderful; and no earthly power is to be compared to his. It even surpasses the power of the angels and saints in heaven. The saints by their powerful intercession, obtain God's grace for us; the priest gives us grace, and the very Author of grace, in Holy Communion. The saints intercede for the sinner; the priest forgives him.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. On what occasion did Our Lord show that He had power to forgive sins?

2. Relate the circumstances of this great miracle.

3. Give a text of Scripture showing that the priest has power to forgive sins.

4. What special service does the priest render Catholics at death?

5. What should we do to obtain this spiritual assistance at death?

REFLECTION

From what you have heard of the wonderful works of the priest, you can judge how we should love and respect him. More than the reverence, love, and obedience of children to their earthly parents, should be our devotion to the priest, the pastor, the physician of our souls. Always overlook his faults and speak well of him. Have entire confidence in him. He holds the place of God in our regard. We are safe when we take his advice regarding salvation. Banish all fear or shame when you go to confession. The priest will never make known what you tell him in confession. He would sooner die than do so. (Relate the example of St. John Nepomucen suffering martyrdom sooner than break the seal of confession.)

MEMORY GEMS

1. *"How many youths born for great things, lose their time in trifles" (Father Rossignoli, S. J.).*

2. *Life is short, souls are precious, and God is infinitely generous in rewarding the least thing that we do for Him.*

3. *"The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few" (Luke, x, 2).*

THE PRIESTHOOD

PART II

EXPOSITION

If the power and the dignity of the priesthood are great, so likewise are the obligations. A young man who would wish to become a priest in order to lead an easy life and to hold an honored position in society, would make a great mistake. The priesthood entails very serious responsibilities. "A priest ought to be adorned with all virtues, and to give example of a good life to others" (Titus, ii, 7). But these obligations are never beyond man's strength; because God's grace is ever at hand for the good priest and never fails to make his burden light. Like St. Paul he can do all things in Him Who strengthens him. "I can do all things in Him Who strengthens me" (Phil., iv, 13).

When a man becomes a priest, he offers himself as a holocaust in the service of God. He takes up his appointed cross, and is ready to follow wheresoever Christ shall lead. He hesitates at no sacrifice. Though his services are ever in demand, he fails not in his ministrations of mercy. Today it is the poor, the widow and the orphan; tomorrow, the would-be convert, the negligent Catholic, or the hardened sinner that calls for his attention. He must teach and preach.

He must show the ignorant and the little ones the road to heaven. He must defend the faith against the attacks of heresy, false science and bigotry. And there are times when he must exercise the greatest heroism. When a fire, an accident, or a pestilence occurs, who is one of the first to respond to the call? It is the priest, who hastens to administer the last sacraments to the dying even at the risk of his own life. Nor does the priest pause or shrink at the horrors of war in ministering to the wounded and the dying on the field of battle. In the late war there were thousands and thousands of priests engaged in this heroic work. It must, indeed, have been a touching sight to our Divine Lord, and to His Angels and saints, to behold the priest saying Mass, hearing confessions and giving communion to the brave soldiers on the eve of battle. We may think only of the heroic virtues which he practised in sharing the hardships of the poor soldiers; but he also had his consolation in the great number of souls that he prepared for heaven. And he was constantly cheered by the heavenly whisper: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" (Matt., xxv, 21).

Finally, priests are frequently called to the crown of martyrdom on the foreign missions. If you read the "Annals of the Faith," you will find that the success of the Church in heathen lands is greatly due to the blood of her martyred priests. The blood of martyrs is the seed of Christianity.

While a priest, through his self-sacrifice and compassion for a sinful world, is a true disciple of the "Man of Sorrows," still he is never without his spiritual joys. If there is joy in heaven over one sinner doing penance, surely the priest, who is the instrument of that conversion, participates therein. That interior consolation derived from his efforts in saving souls, more than compensates him for his sorrows. He knows that there is no greater work on earth than to save a soul redeemed by the blood of Christ. It is this thought that sweetens his labors and buoys him up in the midst of adversities and persecutions.

The other professions, no doubt, contribute much to the welfare of mankind and impart a corresponding satisfaction and pleasure. The statesman is happy in promoting the glory and prosperity of his country; the lawyer feels a genuine satisfaction in maintaining the rights of justice and peace; and the physician is ever joyful on his errands of mercy in healing the ills of the body. But, after all, these noble callings, worthy of all honor and deserving the gratitude of men, deal with things temporal; whereas, the priesthood deals principally with things eternal. Yes; the priest has chosen the better part and the older he grows, the more he realizes it, and the greater become his zeal and self-sacrifice. The one thought of his life is how to save souls. And the one joy of his life is success in his mission. Archbishop Lynch of Toronto said that, on an average, a priest saves 5000 souls during

his life. What glory awaits such a life! No wonder a good priest does not fear death. Cardinal Manning tells us that a vocation to the priesthood is a sign of predestination, and that a happy death is the last of a priest's earthly joys.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. What offering does a man make in becoming a priest?
2. Mention some of his duties to his people.
3. Show how he is called upon to practise great virtue.
4. What is his great consolation on the battlefield?
5. Name some other joys of the priestly life.
6. How does the priesthood compare with other professions?
7. What is the great ambition of a priest's life?
8. What is his great joy?
9. Why is the death of a priest happy?

REFLECTION

It is an old saying, boys, that young people often build castles in the air. And I suppose you are no exception. No doubt you aspire to do great things in the future. You are ambitious for the highest, the best. It is well. But let me ask you, have you ever thought of anything higher or grander than the work of a priest? Is there anything more pleasing to God? Souls, yes, many souls are lost for want of priests.

Whilst the harvest is indeed great, the Church is continually lamenting that "the laborers are few." It is the complaint of Our Dear Lord Himself. He laments that there are so few willing and generous enough to help Him in His vineyard. And may I not say, with truth, that some of you could easily accept His invitation and thus give great joy to His Divine Heart? Remember, my dear boys, life is short, souls are precious, and God is infinitely generous in rewarding the least thing we do for Him. "Whosoever shall give to drink . . . a cup of cold water only, . . . amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward" (Matt., x, 42).

REVIEW

1. What motive should a person have in becoming a priest?
2. How does a priest exercise his wonderful power?
3. How does a priest represent Our Lord?
4. When and by whom were the words of Consecration first pronounced?
5. How ought we to assist at Mass?
6. Why do we go to confession only to a priest?
7. How does the priest assist us at death?
8. How does a priest show great virtue?
9. Mention some of the joys of a priest's life.

NOTE.—Before giving the following Exposition and note the teacher should mention two or three obligations, and two or three advantages of the religious life, promising to give the details in the next two lessons.

EXPOSITION

"The difference between the religious and the secular priest is that the religious is in a state tending to perfection and the secular is not. The secular is not bound to practise poverty and obedience. When both have care of souls in a parish, they are equal in function. The secular priest is more exposed to the dangers of the world. The religious priest leads a more painful life, but he is safer. Bishops are higher in rank and office than priests, and also higher in state than religious. They are supposed to be perfect; whereas religious only tend to perfection" (States of Christian Life and Vocation—Berthier).

NOTE.—The religious priest assumes the obligations and enjoys the advantages of the religious life. The secular priest does neither. The latter lives in the world and labors chiefly for the salvation of the faithful. With the approbation of the Pope or the Bishop of a diocese, the religious priest may take part in the work of the secular priest by taking charge of a parish, giving missions, etc., all in accordance with the object and the rules of his order.

STORY

To illustrate the heroism of the priesthood, Rev. Father Lelen relates the following story: "Some time after the French Revolution, a man who had been noted for killing priests was lying very sick. He had sworn that no priest should enter his house. When a certain missionary was told of the man's condition and the

oath he had taken, he immediately went to see him. At sight of the priest the dying man shouted: 'A priest in my house!' 'Bring me my pistol.' 'What for?' said the priest. 'My only weapon is the love of you which is in my heart.' When he could not get his pistol the man threatened the priest with his fists, exclaiming, 'I tell you, this hand has already choked twelve of you priests.' The priest smiled gently. 'You are mistaken as to the number,' he said. 'It is one less than you say. I am one of those twelve. At Foulon, you failed to kill me. See my scarred neck. Do you remember where you struck me? God saved me to save you.' He then embraced the sick man and helped him to die a happy death."

Boys, many incidents like this could be related of the heroism and charity of priests. Yes; priests are heroes, and like Our Lord on the cross, they are ever ready to pray: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke, xxiii, 34).

ANOTHER STORY

How the Curé of Ars, Archbishop Hughes, and Father Drumgoole, became priests.

FRUIT

Consider well: Ought I to become a priest?

SYNOPSIS

- The Priesthood.
  - Introduction.
    - Questions on last lesson.
    - Priesthood most exalted state.
    - All invited.
  - Power and Dignity.
    - Minister of Christ.
    - Administers the sacraments.
    - Officiates at the Sacrifice of the Mass.
    - Absolves the sinner.
    - Star of hope to the faithful.
  - Obligations.
    - Holy life.
    - Sacrifices on behalf of his people.
    - Great virtue.
  - Consolations.
    - Share in Christ's Joys and Sorrows.
    - Happiness in saving souls.
    - Happy death.
  - Fruit:—Consider well: Ought I to become a Priest?

LESSON IV

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

PART I

INTRODUCTION

1. Is great holiness of life necessary to become a priest?

2. What intention should a person have in becoming a priest?

3. What motives are bad or improper?

4. When does a priest exercise his wonderful power?

5. Wherein does a priest show great virtue?

6. How does he imitate Our Lord?

7. What is the great consolation of a priest?

Some of you boys have, no doubt, read the story of Aladdin and his wonderful lamp. By rubbing the lamp the possessor could obtain anything he wished for. I always found it strange that no one ever wished for heaven. There was another strange thing about that lamp; and that was that no one was ever satisfied when his wishes had been granted. He always wanted something more. More! more! was his cry.

REFLECTION

That is the way, my dear boys, with earthly goods. They cannot satisfy the human heart. They cannot make us happy. You have learned that in the catechism on the last end. There

is only one thing that will make us happy; and that is to do God's will, as expressed by the commandments. When you keep the commandments, you are happy. But if you break even one of them, you are sad and unhappy. Your conscience tells you that you have displeased God, your best friend.

EXPOSITION

Besides keeping the commandments, God wishes some people to enter a state of life in which they will have greater means for keeping the commandments more perfectly, and, therefore, serving Him more perfectly. He invites them to a special service in the priesthood or the religious life. Now, what is the religious life? "The religious state is the firmly established manner of living in community by which the faithful undertake to observe not only the ordinary precepts but also the evangelical counsels, by means of the vows of obedience, chastity, and poverty" (Canon 487).

In the Gospel Our Lord highly recommends the practice of these counsels. They are called evangelical because their practice is advised in the Gospel. They consist of the three great virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Those who embrace the religious life, make vows to observe these counsels. They are the vows of voluntary poverty, perfect chastity, and entire obedience. He who makes the vow of poverty promises to give up all earthly goods; by the vow of

perfect chastity he binds himself to abstain from marriage; and by the vow of obedience he subjects his own will to that of his superiors. These three vows make the essence of the religious life. They are the great means for enabling us to observe the commandments more perfectly.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. What special service does God ask of some people?
2. What is the religious life?
3. What are the three great counsels recommended in the Gospel?
4. Why are they called Evangelical?
5. What does he who makes the vow of poverty promise God?
6. What does a person promise by making the vow of chastity?
7. What does he promise by making the vow of obedience?

REFLECTION

A religious must make a great sacrifice, some of you will say. Some of you may even exclaim with the disciples: "This saying is hard, and who can hear it?" (John, vi, 61). Well, multitudes have heard it from the beginning of Christianity. And multitudes hear it today. Thousands of religious scattered all over the world rejoice in having heard that voice. They gladly testify that Our Lord's yoke is sweet and His burden light. St. Scholastica was in the habit

of saying that, if men knew how peaceful religious are in their houses, the whole world would become a solitude. What these heroic souls have done others can do. It requires only a good will and reliance on God's grace.

EXPOSITION

Yes; the sacrifice is great, very great indeed. But then consider the advantages. The religious life is the most perfect on earth. It is the nearest imitation of the life of Christ. The religious offers to God all that he is and all that he has. He even sacrifices his free will to the honor and glory of God. He gives back to God all that he has received. He has now nothing of his own. He can truly say, with St. Francis, "My God, my all." What heroism! What trust in Providence! How pleasing such an offering! especially when the great majority of men are so attached to themselves and the things of this life. But Our dear Lord is never outdone in generosity. After the young man declined Our Saviour's call to the higher life on account of his attachment to riches, Jesus said to His disciples: "Children, how hard it is for them that trust in riches, to enter the kingdom of God" (Mark, x, 24). Then Peter, addressing His Master, said, "Behold we have left all things and have followed thee! What therefore shall we have?" And Jesus said to them: "Amen, I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on

the seat of His Majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting" (Matt., xix, 27-29).

In what does this hundredfold on earth chiefly consist? It consists chiefly in the joy of doing God's will. A religious knows that he is the friend of God, and that by keeping his vows he is sure of doing God's will. In the world Christians are seldom sure of doing God's will. Hence the anxiety which even the good often experience. They know not that peace of heart which is called "a continual feast." Religious, on the contrary, cannot even conceal their happiness. It shines forth in their countenances. They are always pleasant and agreeable. Physical or mental infirmity may sometimes show an exception. But it only proves the rule. The smiling religious is proverbial. Not that they are exempt from the spiritual warfare to which all men are subject. Not to speak of their missionary labors, God often sends them severe trials to test their virtue. But no matter how great the labor, or how severe the trial, they are still happy; because they know that Our Lord is ever present to help them.

The religious state affords ample time for prayer and opportunity for the practice of virtue. No worldly amusement or business is allowed to

interfere with the attainment of the last end. The great temptations of the world, bad example, and sin are almost entirely excluded from the religious life. Time and work are so regulated that at any moment of the day, the religious can always say, "This is for Thee, O Lord; I offer it for Thy honor and glory." "In the world, time, money, and human life are wasted on trifles. In the cloister, nothing is wasted; all directed to God. All the rules tend to conserve strength of soul and body for the service of God and the salvation of souls. Hence all bodily necessities are supplied without stint; but no superfluities, vanities, or luxuries" ("The Contemplative Life," by a Carthusian Monk).

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. Why is the religious life the most perfect?
2. What does the religious offer to God?
3. Why is that offering heroic?
4. How does Our Lord look upon it?
5. What promise did Our Lord make to St. Peter regarding those who leave all for His sake?
6. In what does that hundredfold chiefly consist?
7. How do religious show their happiness?
8. What great evils are excluded from the religious life?
9. How does business or amusement interfere with prayer and the practice of virtue in the world?
10. Why not in religion?

EXPOSITION

Some young people get a false idea of the advantages of the religious life. They misunderstand the hundredfold. Sometimes those who advise them, paint things in glowing colors, and often exaggerate. They fix their attention on temporal advantages; so that the aspirant imagines that he is going to have "a good time," or achieve earthly glory. Such advice is all wrong, and does a serious injustice to the young. Those who are thinking of entering the religious life, have the right to know the truth. They must know the obligations which they are assuming. The temporal advantages are only accidental. Their great object should be to save their own soul, and to labor for the salvation of others. With St. Paul they should say: "I most gladly will spend and be spent myself for your souls" (II Cor., xii, 15).

It is true that sometimes religious seem to enjoy the good things of this world. They have comfortable dwellings, good food and raiment. Through the charity of the faithful and the commandment of the Church, their livelihood is secured. Their temporal wants are amply supplied in order that their mind and body may be solely occupied in the service of God. Religious belong to that class of whom St. Paul says: "So also the Lord ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel" (I Cor., ix, 13, 14). But individually, they hold nothing as their private property. They simply have the

use of what is necessary. When, as sometimes happens, they lack the necessaries of life, they bless the Lord for giving them a chance to practise more perfectly the poverty which they profess.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. What mistake regarding the hundredfold, do some young people make on entering religion?
2. What is often the cause of this mistake?
3. What should they especially know?
4. How should they regard temporal advantages?
5. What should be their great object in becoming religious?
6. Why are the temporal wants of religious supplied by the faithful?
7. Why can they not own anything in private?

REFLECTION

No, dear boys, the religious life does not consist in having a good time in the worldly sense of the expression. You can infer as much from the nature of the vows. On entering religion, a person must be prepared to follow the life of Christ. He tells His disciples to take up the cross and follow Him. He was unknown, despised, hated and persecuted, forsaken by men and tempted by the devil. He fasted and prayed and labored much in preaching the Gospel. And He is the model of religious. The religious life means carrying the cross. It means prayer, humility, mortification of the senses, poverty, chas-

tity and obedience. It means much labor for souls.

These virtues are the means of sanctifying the soul. They render it more and more perfect. They increase its merits and continually add to its eternal weight of glory. St. Paul tells us that "The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us" (Rom., viii, 18). And with that great apostle, the soul of the religious exceedingly abounds with joy in all its tribulations. Whence comes that joy? It comes from the peace of Christ sustaining the soul in all its labors and sufferings. This is truly the hundredfold of the Gospel.

MEMORY GEMS

1. *"The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us" (Rom., viii, 18).*

2. *"Children, how hard it is for them that trust in riches, to enter the Kingdom of God" (Mark, x, 24).*

3. *"Every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting" (Matt., xix, 29).*

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

PART II

EXPOSITION

One of the greatest joys of the saints in heaven is that they are impeccable. They can do no wrong. What happiness to know that all their thoughts, words, and acts are pleasing to God! Uncertainty in this respect is the one great anxiety of the faithful on earth. "No man knoweth whether he be worthy of love or hatred" (Eccles., ix, 1). Even the saints on earth are not impeccable. It is always possible for them to sin and be lost. But the nearest approach to impeccability is the religious life. Sin and religious are diametrically opposed. And St. Bernard gives the reason in his advantages of the religious life. He tells us that in this state of life man lives more purely and falls more rarely. Within the monastery he is secure against many of the occasions of sin. His vows cut off at once many sins following from pride, avarice, and sensuality; that is, the three concupiscences: love of pleasure, love of money, and love of his own will. His spiritual exercises, prayers, holy mass, holy communion, spiritual reading, etc., attract God's grace in abundance and make him strong to resist the temptations and bad example of the world. No wonder he falls more rarely. St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi would often kiss the

walls of her cloister exclaiming: "O lovely walls! from how many dangers you preserve me!" If the religious through weakness sometimes falls, he rises more quickly. In the state of sin, he is ill at ease. He is like a fish out of water. So he hastens to get back to his normal condition. The sacraments are ever at hand to restore his innocence; and he is powerfully helped by the good example and prayers of his brethren.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. Can the saints in heaven do wrong? The saints on earth?
2. Who among men was impeccable?
3. What is the nearest approach to a sinless life?
4. How does St. Bernard account for the innocence of religious?
5. Why do religious fall more rarely?
6. What particular means of obtaining grace have they?
7. How did St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi regard the cloister?
8. What great remedy has a religious, if he fall into sin?

EXPOSITION

The religious, continues St. Bernard, dies with more confidence. Most people fear death. They dread the very thought of it. They know it will separate them from their friends and kindred, and deprive them of their earthly

pleasures and possessions. But they especially fear it on account of eternity. The religious, on the contrary, rejoices at the approach of death. His whole life has been a preparation for it. He feels that he has faithfully served God and is about to be rewarded. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph are with him in his last moments to console and comfort him. Why then should he not die with greater confidence than people of the world?

Lastly, the religious is purified more quickly and is rewarded more abundantly. His purgatory is short. St. Thomas says that the sins which the religious committed in the world are remitted when he embraces the religious life. "The holy Doctors call the religious profession a second baptism, and theologians assure us, that a person thereby obtains the entire remission of his sins, so that were he then to die, he would not undergo the pains of purgatory" (Instructions on Vows). Besides, his daily sacrifices and penances satisfy in great measure, if not entirely, for the sins committed since his entrance into the religious life. Then again, his purgatory is lessened by the many masses said for him and the prayers and good works of his brethren. So the religious is assured of a speedy entrance into his eternal reward. St. Lawrence Justinian called religion the gate of heaven, and St. Bernard says that it is easy to pass from a cell to heaven. Now, if every man will be rewarded according to his works, surely the heavenly recompense of the

religious will be great. Theologians tell us that on account of his consecration to God, the good works of a religious are far more meritorious than those performed in the world. Our Lord regards such works as offerings of love from his dearest friends.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. How do people of the world regard death?
2. Why do such people fear death?
3. Why do religious rejoice at death?
4. What particular assistance do they get at the moment of death?
5. Why is purgatory short for a religious?
6. How do his brothers help to lessen its duration?
7. Why is his heavenly reward much greater than that of people of the world?
8. How does Our Lord regard the good works of religious?
9. What did St. Lawrence Justinian call the religious life?

REFLECTION

Well, my dear boys, I think you now understand the nature, the obligations, and the advantages of the religious life. And it becomes your duty to consider them carefully. Would you like to be a religious? The obligations are serious but not impossible. When you consider the advantages, the labors become light and even easy. I am sure you all love Our Lord,

and are most anxious to get to heaven. If so, the religious life is about the shortest and easiest road. After saving many souls by your labors, you will die in the sweetest confidence. Your purgatory will be short; and your heavenly reward such as Our Lord gives to His special friends. What more could you desire? Next week I will tell you who are called to the religious life.

REVIEW

1. How does the religious life compare with the other states of life?
2. What sacrifices does the religious make?
3. Name two great advantages.
4. Should temporal advantages be considered in entering religion?
5. How is Our Lord the model of religious?
6. Why does the religious life approach impeccability?
7. What great advantage has the religious in regard to purgatory?
8. Why do the good works of religious receive so great a reward?

STORY

Of St. Bernard's youngest brother. Another story of the first boy who became a Christian Brother.

FRUIT

If, after prayer, advice, and due consideration, you feel inclined to become a religious, ask God for strength and courage to make the sacrifices required.

SYNOPSIS

The Religious Life.

- Introduction.
  - Questions on last lesson.
  - Vanity of earthly goods.
- Definition.
  - Canon 487.
  - Evangelical Counsels—poverty,
  - Chastity and obedience.
- Advantages in General.
  - Most perfect life.
  - Certainty of doing God's will.
  - Comparative freedom from sin and temptation.
  - Temporal advantages.
- Particular Advantages.
  - Happy death.
  - Short purgatory.
  - Greater reward in heaven.

Fruit:—Consider the advantages, as well as the sacrifices of the religious life.

LESSON V

RELIGIOUS ORDERS

PART I

EXPLANATORY

According to the late Code of Canon Law (authorized English Translation):

An *Institute* is a society (Religio) approved by legitimate ecclesiastical authority. The members tend to evangelical perfection, according to the laws proper to their society, by the profession of public vows whether perpetual or temporary, the latter being renewable after the lapse of a fixed time.

An *Order* is an Institute whose members make solemn vows.

A *Monastic Congregation* is the union of several independent monasteries under one and the same Superior.

An *Exempt Institute* is an Institute with either solemn or simple vows, not subject to the jurisdiction of the local Ordinary (Bishop).

A *Religious Congregation,* or simply a *Congregation,* is an Institute whose members make profession of simple vows only, whether perpetual or temporary.

An Institute approved by the Holy See is an Institute which has obtained from the Apostolic See either approbation, or, at least, the decree of commendation.

A *Diocesan Institute* is an Institute erected by an Ordinary, which has not yet obtained the decree of commendation.

A *Clerical Institute* is an Institute the majority of whose members receive Holy Orders.

A *Lay Institute* is an Institute whose members do not receive Holy Orders.

A *Religious House* is a house of any Institute whatever. A *Regular House* is a house of an Order.

Religious are all those who make profession of vows in any Institute whatever.

Regulars are those who make profession of vows in an Order.

Sisters make simple vows; *Nuns* make solemn vows, or by a disposition of the Holy See, simple in certain regions.

A Society without vows is not religious.

Religious Profession, in general, is the act by which one embraces the religious state: (in detail)—a contract by which a Christian takes the three religious vows,—in a Community approved by competent ecclesiastical authority—approved by the Holy See, or the Ordinary of the place where the community was formed—makes vows to God; but surrenders one's self to the Institute, to obey the Superiors.

The difference between solemn and simple vows is not of divine institution. It has been established by the Church, and consists in their effects and release. Both are accepted as sufficient to

constitute the religious state, but solemn vows especially so. The Church rarely dispenses from solemn vows. All vows make certain acts illicit; solemn vows make them also invalid.

INTRODUCTION

1. What is the religious life?

2. What constitutes its essence?

3. What promise did Our Lord make to those who forsake all for His sake?

4. Why are religious happy when severely tried?

5. Mention some spiritual advantages of the religious life.

"Life is real, life is earnest"; says the poet. But according to their words and actions, the majority of men seem to know it not. To them, life is a dream, an amusement. It is only the chosen few, especially religious, whose lives are real and earnest. Yes, boys, it is religious, whom the world mocks and despises, who truly value life. Theirs is a life of good; good for themselves, and good for others. They serve God in spirit and in truth. They are the glory and the pride of the Church. It is upon the religious orders that she relies for the perfection of the Christian life. In all her great struggles against the spirits of darkness, it is to them she looks for her greatest defence. They have the arms, the irresistible weapons prescribed by Our Lord Himself; viz., prayer and penance.

EXPOSITION

"The theologian, Suarez, says the perfection and formation of the religious life is the work of Christ Himself. In the Gospel, says he, Christ exhorts us to practise the evangelical counsels. And, as the vows to practise these counsels are the essence of the religious life, therefore Christ established the religious life. The learned author further tells us that Christ established one religious order in particular, by assembling a number of men, and laying down for them a particular mode of life: that the apostles really took the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, with a view to the state of perfection. The apostles led a mixed form of life—contemplative and active, and Christ appointed as their special end the preaching of the Gospel." (Quoted by Rev. J. Berthier in "Christian Life and Vocation.")

The religious orders, therefore, go back to the time of the apostles; and the Church has always encouraged and developed them. Christ gave the essentials, and left the details to His Church. The Fathers of the first and the second century speak of Christian virgins who practised poverty and chastity. Next came the Confessors such as St. Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, and St. Polycarp. All the latter practised chastity, and some of them practised poverty. In the third century we find monks noted for their retirement, poverty, and austerity. About the year

A. D. 250, there appeared the hermits, Paul of Thebes, Anthony, and Pacomius. St. Basil is represented as having a great influence over the monks of the East. He showed that those who live in the monastery have a great advantage over the solitary, especially in the practice of charity. He counselled moderation in mortification, and sanctioned the education of children in the monastery.

St. Augustine formulated the first outline of rules for a society of nuns at Hyppo. He himself, with some of the clergy, followed what is called the canonical life. St. Patrick established the religious life in Ireland. St. Columbanus founded monasteries, and he, with other Irish monks, greatly assisted in the conversion of Germany and other European countries.

The great object of the early monks was their personal sanctification. They did not aspire to Holy Orders. They practised poverty, chastity and obedience; but they had no vows as we understand them today. Rules were given by St. Basil and improved on by St. Benedict. St. Benedict's rules were observed from the eighth to the twelfth century. Then appeared the great St. Bernard, the light of the Cistercians. The latter, with the Benedictines, and the Carthusians were the noted orders of this period.

In the twelfth and the thirteenth century, the clergy were accused of laxity, and of being attached to riches. As an answer to this accusation, St. Francis and St. Dominic established

what are called the mendicant orders. These orders practised poverty not only individually, but also in common. They were supported by the alms of the faithful. Besides the Franciscans and the Dominicans, the Carmelites and the Servites also belong to the early mendicant orders.

The military orders likewise date from the twelfth century. They observed the essentials of the religious life, and had for their object the defence of Christendom by the force of arms. There were the Knights of Malta, Knights of Jerusalem, Knights Templars, etc.

There were also other orders whose object was the relief of bodily ills. And thus coming down the ages, we see a great variety of orders originating according to the wants of the times or the necessities of the Church. They have always proved strong defenders of the faith and an infallible remedy for the evils of society.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. How do the majority of men regard life?
2. How do religious regard it?
3. How does the theologian, Suarez, show that Christ established the religious orders?
4. What was the special end of the Apostles?
5. What religious are mentioned by the Fathers of the first and the second century?
6. Mention two of the great hermits.
7. What part did the Irish monks take in civilizing Europe?

8. Name three great orders of the early days.

9. What was the origin of the mendicant orders?

EXPOSITION

Religious orders are divided into the contemplative, the active, and the mixed. The contemplative religious lead a life of prayer and penance. Their great object is union with God and the salvation of souls by self-sacrifice. They heed the injunction, "Unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish" (Luke, xiii, 3). It has been noticed in the history of the Church, that wherever their monasteries were established, there Christianity flourished. Mgr. Lefebvure, Bishop of Cochin-China, said that ten religious who pray, would help him more than twenty missionaries who preach. It is related that St. Teresa, by a single prayer, converted ten thousand heretics.

Among the contemplatives are the Carthusians, founded by St. Bruno, who live in solitude and who are engaged in purely spiritual works; secondly, the Trappists, who live in community and practice severe bodily austerities; and thirdly, the Benedictines, whose life is less penitential than that of the Carthusians and Trappists, but very interior, and greatly devoted to education.

The active orders preach the Gospel, teach religion, and by their missionary labors, contribute to the welfare of the Church. They deal directly with men, and are the external instruments employed by God for the salvation of souls. When,

to this activity, an order joins contemplation, we call it a mixed order. It is the opinion of St. Thomas that the mixed is the most perfect of all orders. From their penitential life and their union with God, they derive a wonderful influence for good. Hence the great preachers never forget to strengthen their efforts by prayer and fasting.

The *Carmelite Order* claims the distinction of being the oldest in the Church. It traces its origin to St. Elias, the Prophet of Carmel, who is considered as the founder of the Monastic state by many illustrious scholars, among whom may be mentioned St. Jerome, St. John Chrysostom and St. Peter Damien.

In the twelfth century the Order received a more definite organization. St. Berthold, a Frenchman and a Crusader, was chosen Superior General. He was succeeded by St. Brocard, who gave the religious a more complete Rule, this being again amplified in 1207 by St. Albert, Patriarch of Jerusalem and Legate of the Holy See.

The Carmelite life was originally strictly contemplative, but, with the growing need for missionaries, it combined the active with the contemplative.

The special work of the Carmelite Order is the spreading of devotion to the Blessed Virgin as widely as possible. The Brown Scapular, given by our Blessed Mother to St. Simon Stock, is universally known, and the many miracles wrought through its instrumentality, have shown

what a truly wonderful devotion it is. The present Sovereign Pontiff, Pius XI, has approved it and confirmed the privileges connected with it, including the Sabbatine Indulgence.

Besides conducting educational work in Ireland, the Irish Province of the Order has a number of Priests engaged in missionary labors, in America and Australia.

It is said that the most famous order of the middle ages was the *Dominican,* whose members were remarkable for their defence of the faith. Their object was salvation by preaching. They taught science in schools and universities, and produced some very learned men, such as Albertus Magnus and St. Thomas Aquinas.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. How are religious orders divided?
2. Which is the most perfect?
3. What kind of life do the contemplative religious lead?
4. What is the work of the active orders?
5. What was the great order of the middle ages? What was its object?
6. What is the special work of the Carmelite Order?
7. How did the Dominicans show their zeal for education?

REFLECTION

When you examine the lives of religious, boys, when you hear of their prolonged prayer, fasting, and other bodily penances, you may wonder why men embrace such a state of life. It is because of their great love of God and their

hatred of sin. They love God and, therefore, they love to speak to Him in prayer. They hate sin because He hates it. And by their penances, they endeavor to make satisfaction not only for their own sins, but also for the sins of others. Hence St. Teresa's aspiration, "To suffer or to die." That is the secret of the monks' existence. They know the value of souls; while many people in the world live as though they had no soul to save.

"Four men of the world visited a monastery. One of them, much interested in what he saw, said to his companions: Either these men or we ourselves are mad. We think that life consists in never facing one's real self, but in being constantly carried away by the whirlwind of business or pleasure. But here are men who condemn themselves to live face to face with realities, with no amusements, and no respite. This is a problem that I mean to solve. He did so; and he became a monk." ("The Contemplative Life," A Carthusian Monk.)

MEMORY GEMS

1. "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, . . . and come follow Me" (Matt., xix, 21).

2. "Unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish" (Luke, xiii, 3).

3. "No man can serve two masters. . . . You can not serve God and Mammon" (Matt., vi, 24).

4. "Life is real, life is earnest"; but the majority of men make it a dream, an amusement.

RELIGIOUS ORDERS

PART II

EXPOSITION

The Jesuits, or Society of Jesus, were founded by St. Ignatius Loyola in 1540. It is a religious order of the mendicant class, modified according to the Council of Trent. It consists of a body of priests engaged in apostolic works of various kinds. St. Ignatius placed the society at the disposal of the Pope to be employed as he thought best. Besides their missionary labors in heathen nations, like China and Japan, they have always been noted defenders of the faith and sound doctrine. They fought Protestantism in Germany, Austria, and France. And they are still found among the staunch defenders of Catholic truth. To the ordinary vows they add a fourth to obey the Pope in regard to missions. Education is enjoined by their constitutions, and, therefore, they teach in many colleges and universities. They conduct missions, give retreats, take charge of parishes, and, in general, adapt themselves to the immediate wants of the Church. One of their great works is the direction of the "League of the Sacred Heart."

The *Redemptorist Order* is a religious congregation of missionary priests founded by St. Alphonsus Liguori, 1732, at Scala, Italy. Their original object was to labor among the neglected

country people near Naples. According to their rule they are to strive to imitate the life of Our Lord, especially by preaching the word of God to the poor. In all their missions they are to give a sermon on prayer and another on devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary.

The *Passionists Order* was founded by St. Paul of the Cross. He wrote the rules in 1720 while still a layman, and wrote them very quickly as though inspired. His intention was to unite the contemplative life of the Carthusians or the Trappists, with the active life of the Jesuits. The great object was to awaken the memory of the Passion, which is the subject of their fourth vow. The Order was approved by Pope Benedict XIII, and their first house was opened near the summit of Mt. Argentaro, where it is still to be seen. The mother house is in Rome, attached to their church of Sts. John and Paul. They practise mortification and penance similar to that of the contemplative orders. Their labors consist chiefly in giving missions, retreats, and sometimes in taking charge of parishes.

The *Order of the Most Holy Sacrament* is a religious Congregation founded by Ven. Father Peter Julian Eymard. Its origin is thus described by the Founder: "One afternoon in January, 1851, I went to Notre Dame de Fourvieres. One thought absorbed me: Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament had no Religious Order of men to honor Him in this mystery of love, no religious body making the Eucharist the one ob-

ject to which their lives should be consecrated. One is needed. I promised Mary to devote myself to carrying out this idea."

Four years were spent in deliberation and consultation. Finally he severed his connection with the Marists with whom he had lived seventeen years. Pope Pius IX blessed and commended the work declaring that the Church had need of this new Society. He himself signed the laudatory brief and enriched the Society with many indulgences.

The object of the Congregation is to honor the Blessed Sacrament by perpetual adoration. The one object in life for each of the members is to adore, to honor, and to serve Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist. Their missionary labors are confined to those which relate directly to the noble end of their society.

"They are not to share in the toils of the missionary or to devote themselves to any absorbing ministry. They only serve the Royal Presence and take care that the Master is never left alone."

The Blessed Sacrament is perpetually exposed; and each religious devotes two hours during the day, and one at night to adoration.

Ven. Father Eymard also founded a Religious Order of women called the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament, with the same end and rule as the priests. The Priests League and the League of the People are likewise fruits of his zeal. Though established very recently, these associations are becoming very popular. Like

Daily Communion they are a great means of sanctification.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. Who was the founder of the Jesuits?
2. To what class of orders do they belong?
3. In what works are they engaged?
4. Why was the Redemptorist Order founded?
5. What two subjects must they include in their sermons?
6. What is there remarkable about the rule of the Passionists?
7. What is their object?
8. To what kind of orders do they belong?
9. Who founded the Order of the Most Holy Sacrament?
10. How does he account for its origin?
11. How do its members carry out the purpose of the Order?

REFLECTION

Among the objects of the different orders, there is none that should appeal more forcibly to our heart than that of the Society of the Blessed Sacrament. Like Martha (Luke, x, 38), other orders are busy about many things in the service of God. But this society has chosen the better part. With Mary it is content to rest at the feet of Jesus and hear His words of life. Love, adoration, and thanksgiving are its aspirations. Its activities are a prelude to those of heaven.

On one occasion a Protestant lady asked a priest why Catholics raise their hat in passing before a church. The priest replied that it is through respect for Our Lord who dwells in the tabernacle. "Do you Catholics really believe," asked the lady, "that Our Lord is present in your churches?" "Yes, madam," answered the priest, "we Catholics believe it as an article of faith." "If I believed it," said the lady, "I would go there and stay all day in His presence."

And boys, we Catholics often deny Our dear Lord the pleasure of a short visit or even an act of adoration. Truly, there is need of the Order of the Blessed Sacrament.

EXPOSITION

The *Congregation of Priests of the Mission* is a congregation of secular priests founded by St. Vincent de Paul. In France and many other countries they are known as Lazarists; in Ireland and parts of the United States, as Vincentians. The Society was founded in 1625, through the patronage of the de Gondy family in Picardy, France. The original object of the society was to labor for the salvation of poor country people. They were brought to the United States in 1816 by Bishop Dubourg of New Orleans. He sent them to upper Louisiana, which then included Arkansas, Missouri and Illinois. Their progress was rapid, and they were soon established in many parts of the country. Rev. John Timon, who afterwards became the first Bishop

of Buffalo, was the first superior of the United States Province. While they sometimes reluctantly take charge of parishes, their great work consists in giving missions and retreats.

The *Sulpicians* were introduced into the United States by Bishop Carroll in 1791. They opened the first American Seminary at Baltimore, Md. It was called St. Mary's; but it failed for want of students. The Sulpicians then placed themselves at the disposition of the Bishop for whatever work he thought best. They were all very successful, but Father Richard was the most remarkable. He established Catholic schools, founded a preparatory seminary, set up the first printing press in the West, started the first Catholic newspaper in the United States, and the first secular paper in Michigan. He was the only priest ever elected to Congress. His statue is in the City Hall of Detroit.

In 1822, St. Mary's Seminary was endowed by Pius VII, and has had a brilliant career ever since. It counts thirty bishops and eighteen hundred priests as its graduates.

The Sulpicians also founded Mount St. Mary's, Emmitsburg, St. Charles, Ellicott City, and had charge of Dunwoodie Seminary, Yonkers, until 1906. At present, 1922, they also conduct the Junior and the Senior Seminary at Menlo Park, San Francisco.

The *Congregation of Holy Cross* is a society of priests and lay brothers called Religious of Holy Cross. They make simple vows of poverty, chas-

tity, and obedience. Their object is threefold; their own sanctification, that of their fellowmen by preaching, and the Christian education of youth. Their largest province is in the United States, and their principal establishment is that of Notre Dame, Indiana. It was founded in 1842, by Father Sorin. Today it is recognized as one of the best universities in the country.

The *Congregation of the Holy Ghost* is a religious congregation founded in 1703, to supply missionaries for the most neglected country districts. They are especially noted for their heroic labors in Africa. Their novitiate is located at Ferndale, in the diocese of Hartford.

The *Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle*, or the *Paulist Fathers,* was founded by Father Isaac Thomas Hecker, in 1858, both in Rome and New York. Father Hecker's associates in the foundation were Father A. F. Hewit, George Deshon, Francis A. Baker, and Clarence A. Walworth. They had all been members of the Redemptorist Congregation; but with the sanction of Rome, they separated and formed the new Society of the Paulists.

According to good authorities, Father Hecker, long before his separation from the Redemptorists, had intimations from heaven that he was destined to labor for the conversion of this country. It is this object that actuates the Paulists in all their missionary work. They are known as the great convert workers. They employ every means possible, such as sermons, lectures, spe-

cial missions, and the press, to enlighten and appeal to non-Catholics.

The Paulists' mother house is at 59th Street, New York, and their novitiate and house of studies are connected with the Catholic University at Washington, D. C.

The *Oratorians,* or the Oratory of St. Philip Neri, a congregation of secular priests, was founded by St. Philip Neri in Rome about 1560. They live under obedience, but are not bound by vows. The object of their society is threefold: prayer, teaching and the frequentation of the sacraments. The English Oratorians were founded in England by Cardinal (1879) Newman in 1847. Father William Faber joined them in 1848.

The *Franciscans,* also called *Friars Minor,* were founded by St. Francis of Assisi in 1209. The Dominicans, the Augustinians, and the Carmelites are also classed as Friars. They all devote their labors to the ministry of the Church, and are spread over many countries of Europe and America. They are to be distinguished from the Monks, whose lives are spent in retirement and solitude.

Some of the lesser orders of Friars are the Third Order Regular of St. Francis, the Capuchins as a branch of the Franciscans, the discalced Carmelites as a distinct branch of the Carmelites, and others.

The *Capuchin Order* is one of the three branches of the First Order of St. Francis. These branches are: (a) the Conventuals, (b)

the Observants, and (c) the Capuchins. The object of the Capuchins was to restore the original severity of the rule. There are two Provinces of the Capuchins in the United States; namely, that of New York and that of Pennsylvania.

It is well to remember the distinction between religious orders and religious congregations. In religious orders the vows are solemn; but in religious congregations they are simple. Still, according to common usage, the two terms are synonymous.

Besides the religious congregations of priests, those teaching orders that make simple perpetual vows, and are approved by the Pope, are also religious congregations. Such is our order, "The Brothers of the Christian Schools."

As our time is limited, we can not go over much of the history of the religious orders. I have given simply the principal facts in reference to religious orders and congregations in general and some of those of whom you may have a little knowledge from assisting at retreats, missions, etc. If any of you wish to get further information, you should write to a member of the order in question for a prospectus.

EXPOSITION

No doubt, boys, you have heard the expression, "lazy monks" applied to the old religious orders. Well, you need not be surprised, as the phrase is used only by the ignorant and the

enemies of the Church. Like that other Protestant myth, "The Dark Ages," it is to be ignored as unworthy of notice. In Dr. Walsh's "Thirteenth Century," and other works, the so-called "Dark Ages" are shown to be among the brightest in history. And from what I have told you of the lives of the monks, you can easily see that they were anything but lazy. But leaving their religious activities out of the question, what did they do for civilization? The best authorities, non-Catholic, as well as Catholic, tell us that it is to the Church, greatly through her religious orders, that we owe the civilization of Europe. The conversion of the barbarian, the abolition of slavery, the reclaiming of vast tracts of wilderness, the founding of cities, the preservation of ancient literature, the teaching and development of the arts and sciences,—these were the great works of the Church and her "lazy monks." (Philosophy of Literature, Brother Azarias.)

One of the latest writers who also bears testimony to the social activities of the monks, is G. K. Chesterton, in his "Short History of England." "It is not merely flippant," says he, "to say that the monks and nuns stood to mankind as a sort of sanctified league of uncles and aunts. It is a commonplace that they did everything that nobody else would do; above all, by a perpetual patchwork of charity, they kept the poor from the most distant sight of their modern despair." (Quoted by "America.")

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. Who founded the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission?

2. By what names are they known?

3. What was their original work?

4. How are they engaged at present?

5. When and by whom were the Sulpicians introduced into the United States?

6. Which is their principal seminary?

7. Who was the most remarkable of their first members?

8. Mention some of his great achievements.

9. What is the object of the Religious of Holy Cross?

10. What is their principal establishment?

11. For what is the Congregation of the Holy Ghost noted?

12. What was the origin of the Paulist Fathers?

13. What is their great mission?

14. Name some of the Friars Minor.

15. What is the difference between an order and a congregation?

16. How do you show that the monks were not lazy?

REFLECTION

No, indeed, the monks were not lazy; neither were they selfish. They lived for God and the welfare of their neighbor. They were not satisfied with telling the hungry to be good. They

sought the soul, it is true; but they also took care of the body. The monasteries were not only houses of prayer; they were also asylums of comfort for the wretched and the miserable. "The philanthropists of today," says Mr. Chesterton, "first make themselves rich." The monks first made themselves poor, that they might the better realize the miseries of the poor.

Hence, boys, if you wish to live well, if you wish to imitate the monks and do some good in this world, you must love the poor. You must assist them in every way possible. You must become as one of them, if not in fact, at least in spirit. Then, indeed, you will be blessed. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt., v, 3).

REVIEW

1. What is meant by, "Life is real, life is earnest"?

2. How did Christ establish one particular institute?

3. Which is the better kind of life, the monastic or the solitary?

4. What is a mendicant order?

5. Name a contemplative order, a mixed order.

6. How do the contemplative orders differ from the active in regard to the salvation of souls?

NOTE.—It would be well to repeat here the Exposition and Note on page 64.

STORY

It is related that a courtier having become disgusted with the frivolities and luxuries of the court, renounced the world, and became a monk. One day, while begging alms, he met one of his former companions. The latter treating him with derision, addressed him thus: "Say, old man, won't you be greatly disappointed if there be no heaven?" "Yes"; replied the monk, "I certainly will. But, my friend, won't you be eternally disappointed if there is a hell?"

FRUIT

Always prefer the things of eternity to those of time.

(For reference, see Catholic Encyclopedia, Monks of the West, The Contemplative Life, by a Carthusian Monk, and Butler's Lives of the Saints.)

MEMORY GEMS

1. *"Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and art troubled about many things: But one thing is necessary" (Luke, x, 41-42).*

2. *"The philanthropists of today," says Mr. Chesterton, "first make themselves rich." The monks first made themselves poor, that they might the better realize the miseries of the poor.*

3. *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven" (Matt., v, 3).*

SYNOPSIS

Religious Orders.

- **Introduction.**
  - Questions on last lesson.
  - Life of religious real and earnest.
- **Origin.**
  - Established by Our Lord.
  - Continued by the Church.
  - Early examples.
- **Different Kinds.**
  - Contemplative.
  - Active.
  - Mixed.
- **Later Orders.**
  - Carmelites, Franciscans,
  - Jesuits, Redemptorists.
  - Passionists, Blessed Sacrament.
  - Vincentians, Holy Ghost, Holy Cross, Sulpicians, Paulists, Oratorians.
- **Work for Society.**
  - Converted the barbarians.
  - Founded cities.
  - Banished slavery.
  - Preserved literature.
  - Developed the arts and sciences.
  - Cared for the poor.

Fruit:—Prefer the things of eternity to those of time.

LESSON VI

THE TEACHING RELIGIOUS ORDERS

PART I

INTRODUCTION

1. Why do we say that religious truly value life?

2. How did the Apostles lead a mixed life?

3. Mention one or two of the great hermits.

4. Who was the first to establish the religious life in Ireland?

5. Mention a few of the things that the monks did for Europe.

6. What was the object of the military orders?

7. Which is the most perfect kind of order?

8. Name three of the active orders of the present day.

You have heard what a glorious thing it is to be a priest, and what a happy life is that of the religious. In the last lesson you learned something of the object and the work of the religious orders. Today we will examine the life of one particular kind of religious orders, called the Teaching Religious Orders.

Teaching is one of the great works of the Church. Christ said to His Apostles and their successors: "Go, teach all nations" (Matt., xxviii, 19). But the number of priests being

limited, and their ministry so diversified, they cannot devote all the time and attention required for teaching. Hence the necessity of teaching orders, of societies that will be solely occupied with imparting a thorough Christian education.

From time to time God has inspired holy men and women to found such societies, and the Church has never failed to foster and encourage their work. She considers such congregations as her great auxiliaries in the preservation of the faith among her children. That is why she has raised them to the rank of religious congregations, and enriched their good works with many precious indulgences and spiritual blessings.

EXPOSITION

Religious teaching congregations, duly approved by the Church, assume the obligations and enjoy the advantages of the religious life. The members are vowed to the practice of the evangelical counsels, as interpreted by their rules and constitutions. They live in community and are governed by a superior general and local directors. They are supported by the parishes in which they teach, and, in general school matters, conform to the regulations of the diocese. Besides parochial schools, they sometimes conduct colleges, high schools, and protectories.

The principal brotherhoods in the United States are the Brothers of the Christian Schools, the Marist Brothers, the Brothers of Mary, the Franciscan Brothers, the Irish Christian Broth-

ers, Brothers of the Holy Cross, Brothers of the Sacred Heart, Brothers of Charity, and the Xaverian Brothers. The Alexian Brothers do not teach, but devote their lives to the noble charity of caring for the sick, the dying, and the insane, in hospitals and asylums.

The importance of Christian education has been realized by the greatest minds of every age. St. Jerome called teaching an apostolic function. "I have examined in vain," said the Venerable Chancellor Gerson, "and find no more glorious duty than that of educating youth." Bishop Dupanloup calls education a Divine work. "Intellectual, moral, and religious education," says he, "is the highest human work that can be performed. It is a continuation of the Divine." St. Thomas says that it is more meritorious to impart light than to glitter; and that the occupation of teaching and of leading others to virtue is more estimable than martyrdom. "There is no painter," says St. John Chrysostom, "there is no sculptor, nor artist, be he who he may, that can be compared to the man who knows how to form the minds and hearts of youth. This is a work far surpassing the first creations of human art, to reproduce in souls the living image of Jesus Christ."

In no other country of the world have the benefits of Catholic education been more highly appreciated than in the United States. From the dawn of the Republic, the Church has made

every effort to found and encourage Christian Schools. Our bishops and archbishops assisted by zealous pastors, have introduced the teaching orders wherever possible. Their first work was to establish schools. They acted on the principle of Archbishop Hughes, "Build the school, and the Church will build itself." Archbishop Bayley of Baltimore, wrote, "A church without Catholic schools does not deserve the name of parish and can bring little consolation to the hearts of either priest or people." And His Eminence, Cardinal Gibbons, years ago, expressed the fear that "Unless provision was made for the Christian culture of youth, it would be much easier in twenty years to find a church for a congregation than a congregation for a church."

If the faith is so strong in the great archdiocese of New York, if the clergy are models for the world, if the laity are so energetic in practical Catholicity, it is greatly owing to the extraordinary zeal of the late Cardinal Farley and his predecessors, in building schools. In season and out of season, the Cardinal never tired in his efforts to promote Catholic education. Every parish was obliged to have its parochial school. He would accept no excuse for delay or negligence in this fundamental work of the Church. Hence the flourishing condition in which he left the schools and the teaching orders of his diocese.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. Why are the teaching orders necessary?
2. How does the Church regard such societies?
3. How has the Church enriched their good works?
4. How are they governed?
5. How are they supported?
6. Name three of the principal brotherhoods.
7. How did Gerson esteem Christian education?
8. How does St. Thomas praise it?
9. What importance have the bishops of this country attached to it?
10. What is meant by "build the school, and the church will build itself"?

EXPOSITION

As the outcome of these early and later efforts, increased and intensified down to our own day, Archbishop Spalding is able to testify that "The greatest religious fact in the United States today is the Catholic School System, maintained without any aid, except from the people who love it." And "the people who love it" have reason to feel proud of it. According to the "Directory of Catholic Colleges and Schools," for 1921, this great system includes 16 universities, 51 seminaries, 62 colleges for men, 52 colleges for women, 1552 high schools, 829 parochial high schools, 113 religious seminaries, 309 novitiates and train-

ing schools, 6551 elementary schools, and almost 2,000,000 pupils. The number of teachers, including Brothers, Sisters, and lay men and women, is 54,265. Nine-tenths of these teachers are religious. There are eleven teaching brotherhoods, and more than two hundred and sixty sisterhoods.

To maintain our Catholic system of schools costs money. It is estimated that our school property is worth more than one hundred million dollars. The annual expenditure for equipment, repairs, and teachers, is in the neighborhood of twenty million dollars, just about one-third of what it costs to support an equal number of public schools, thanks to the religious, who work for love and not for salary.

Yes; we have reason to be proud of our school system. It is one of the greatest exponents of the strong faith of our people who are determined, at any and every sacrifice, that their children shall not grow up ignorant of their religion and their God. Some few Catholics seem to doubt the efficiency of the Catholic school, but that is owing to their ignorance of facts. Taken individually and under fair conditions, the graduates of Catholic schools and colleges hold their own with the best in the land. Archbishop Riordan, of San Francisco, some years ago, spoke thus: "Now, I say, and say it plainly, that we are giving to the American nation as well developed and as well educated a class of people as any in the land." Among business men it is com-

mon knowledge that the graduates of our parochial schools are always in demand, and are preferred to those of the public schools. As their employers express it, they know the elements, they can think, and they have character. No Catholic boy or girl, therefore, need feel regret, or at a disadvantage, because he or she has attended only a Catholic school. On the contrary, both Catholic parents and Catholic children should consider it a misfortune if obliged to patronize the public schools.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. What does Archbishop Spalding call the Catholic School System?

2. How many parish schools does it include?

3. How many high schools and colleges?

4. About how many children attend the Catholic schools?

5. How many Catholic teachers are there?

6. How many brotherhoods? sisterhoods?

7. What is the Catholic school property worth?

8. What does it cost to maintain the Catholic School System?

9. How much does the Catholic System save the State in taxes?

10. To what is its necessity due?

11. How do graduates of Catholic Schools compare with those of Public Schools?

REFLECTION

And why all this anxiety on the part of the Clergy, and all these sacrifices by Catholic parents? It is, boys, as said before, that you, and Catholic children in general, may not lose the precious gift of faith which you and they received in Baptism. It is well for you to think of this from time to time. You will then better appreciate the blessings which you enjoy. You will show more sympathy and gratitude towards your parents. Owing to peculiar circumstances, location, laxity of some parents, etc., many Catholic children are deprived of these blessings. You are the favored ones. And why? It is, no doubt, because God wishes you to do some special work in the future and thus prepares you for it. So ask yourselves what is that special work; and see that you gratefully correspond with this great favor and proof of His love.

The grace of a Catholic education is very great; but it entails a corresponding responsibility to God and your fellow men.

MEMORY GEMS

1. *"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all He hath done for thee" (Ps. cii, 2).*

2. *"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts, ix, 6).*

THE TEACHING RELIGIOUS ORDERS

PART II

EXPOSITION

Now we come to the question, who should join the teaching orders? After comparing the happiness of the higher life with the dangers of the world, you are convinced, with St. Thomas, that it is safer to be in religion than outside of it. Many young people really desire to do great things for God; but they cannot decide which branch of His service they should choose. As will be explained more fully in a later lesson, young people can overcome this difficulty by prayer, consideration, and consultation. By prayer they will obtain the light of faith and purity of intention. By consultation they will get the benefit of the experience of others. But they themselves must give due consideration to the advantages and the obligations of the different states, especially of the one they seem to like most. Let them remember that likes or dislikes do not determine a vocation. Can I save my soul and do much good for the glory of God in such a state? Am I qualified, or can I acquire the qualifications necessary? These are the two great questions that one should answer before coming to a decision.

As to who should become Brothers, the same rule should be followed. A vocation to a teach-

ing brotherhood is a distinct vocation, one requiring mental ability and traits of character of a very special kind. It has been said, and you may have seen it in print, that a young man who has not sufficient talent to become a priest, can become a teaching brother. This statement is, at least, misleading. The difference between a Brother and a Priest is not measured in units of intelligence. "Neither," says the Editor of the Catholic School Journal, "are the members of the teaching brotherhoods, would-be priests, nor aspirants to the priesthood who didn't have intellect enough to study theology. Brothers are specialists in the highest and best sense of the word." And theirs is a very special vocation. As many a learned and successful Priest would be an utter failure in the classroom; so, in general, young men who are called to be Brothers, would be entirely out of place in the priesthood. We know there are exceptions. Still, as a rule, a young man who studies the life of a priest as well as that of a brother, and carefully examines his own qualifications or "fitness of nature and grace," will not make the mistake of embracing one vocation as a stepping-stone to the other. Nor will he enter a teaching brotherhood under the impression that he will not be obliged to study. The life of a teaching brother is one of continual study. He must know not only the branches he teaches, but also the best and the latest methods of imparting that knowledge. He must study character and take the surest means

of fashioning that character into the Christian and the citizen. A brother, in fact, is never satisfied with his knowledge. Every day he adds something new to his store of information. Even piety and virtue, although most important for the Christian teacher, cannot replace the wisdom of well-digested knowledge. "We need scholars who are saints," says Bishop Spalding, "and saints who are scholars."

On the other hand, teaching must not be regarded as a drudgery. The religious teacher has his recompense even here below. He receives the respect and the gratitude of his pupils and their parents. He is highly esteemed and his word is accepted as authority. Not to speak of the joy that he feels in saving souls, he enjoys the great intellectual pleasures of his profession. For example, what more satisfying, what more entrancing, than to see young minds gradually developing under his tutelage? For him study is not a task, but a delightful occupation, or excursion into the realms of truth, goodness, and beauty.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. What difficulty do many young people find in selecting a suitable branch of God's service?

2. By what means can they overcome this difficulty?

3. What is the important thing to consider before entering any state of life?

4. How is a vocation to a brotherhood distinguished from one to the priesthood?

5. What special knowledge must a Brother have?

6. Mention some of the consolations of a religious teacher.

EXPOSITION

The great object of the founders of religious societies has been to supply a want or a need for the betterment of mankind. And those who joined such societies were actuated by the same motive. The greater the want, the greater their zeal to supply a remedy. In selecting their life-work, they reckoned more on the good they could accomplish than on the personal advantages to be derived from it. They left the reward to God. They were pleased and satisfied that He was pleased with their efforts.

Now, in the opinion of those who study the progress of the Church, especially in our own country, there is no greater want than a vast army of Brothers and Sisters to instruct the young in the principles of faith. Truly, in many parts of the country, the little ones are crying for bread, the bread of life, and there is no one to break it for them. "The little ones have asked for bread, and there was none to break it unto them" (Lam., iv, 4).

Archbishop Keane of Dubuque said that he was more solicitous for the spread of teaching orders than the priesthood. "Education today,"

said he, "is the greatest work which the Church has in hand."

The Right Rev. Bishop Byrne of Nashville calls the school the nursery of God on earth, where the young of Christ take root and grow into the tree that is to bear fruit in after years in the Church. When the enemies of God would destroy religion, they seize the school. "Give us the child," they reason, "and we are sure of the future." That accounts for the persecution of the teaching orders in France, Germany, Italy and other countries.

Again, let us hear the message of Pope Leo XIII, to our Brothers on this subject: "I charge you to increase your numbers in order to resist the efforts of atheists and materialists, who are endeavoring to destroy Christian education, which can alone regenerate society. . . . Multiply your schools, and let them everywhere reflect the zeal and devotedness of your founder."

After hearing these eminent prelates and Pope Leo XIII on the importance and the necessity of Christian education, you will not be surprised, boys, if our Brothers are most anxious to get good young men to join their Institute. They also realize the necessity of Christian education. They are on the battle field. They know the good our schools are doing; but they also know how little it is when compared with what could be done, if we had more brothers. Bishops and pastors are appalled at the loss of faith for want of Catholic schools. They are continually

asking for brothers, but there are none to give them. That is the present need, the great want of the Church today. Should it not appeal to the generous, noble-hearted young men of our schools who have been blessed with a Christian education?

In 1694 M. Bourdoise, a great friend of St. Vincent de Paul, expressed his appreciation of Christian education as follows: "I believe that an apostolic man of a truly saintly spirit might attain a higher sanctity in the office of a simple schoolmaster than in any other way, and that the best and greatest teachers of the university would not be too good for it. But because parish schools are poor, and have to do with the children of the poor and the laboring classes, they are thought to be of no consequence; and yet they are the best means to root out vice and establish virtue, and I defy any man to find a better."

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. What has been the great object of the founders of religious orders?
2. How did Archbishop Keane express himself regarding the teaching orders?
3. What did Bishop Byrne call the school?
4. What injunction did Pope Leo XIII lay on the Brothers?

REFLECTION

Once more, dear boys, who should join the teaching brotherhoods? Theirs is a life of hu-

mility and sacrifice. It is less exalted than that of the priesthood. Nor can it compare, in the opinion of some, in external mortification and penance with the great contemplative religious orders. Withal it is a life of the highest sanctity, and genuine heroism. Moreover, it is a life of such merit as to deserve a very special glory in heaven. Our Lord tells us, "He that shall do and teach, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt., v, 19). And the prophet Daniel says: "They that instruct many unto justice, shall shine as stars for all eternity" (Dan., xii, 3). And Father Cassilly, S. J. ("What Shall I Be?"), says that, in the opinion of theologians, religious teachers, like the martyrs and virgins, will enjoy a special reward or crown, called the Doctor's or Teacher's aureola.

Having this necessary knowledge, boys, it is for you yourselves individually, to decide whether you should become a brother or not. If, after due examination, prayer, and advice, you believe that you are not qualified to take upon yourself the responsibility of the priesthood, whether secular or religious, and yet you would like to enjoy the advantages of the religious life, you should then ascertain, by using the means to choose well, whether or not Our Lord invites you to join one of the brotherhoods. But, as said before, do not enter a teaching brotherhood because you imagine that you will have less to study than in the priesthood.

Our Brothers have encouraged many of their pupils to become priests, and they are always happy to foster such vocations. As a proof, we have merely to consider the number of archbishops, bishops and priests who point with pride to Manhattan College, New York, La Salle College, Philadelphia, or other colleges and high schools of the Brothers, as their Alma Mater. But, at the same time, our Brothers are greatly pleased to find some of their pupils qualified and anxious to join themselves in showing the little ones the road to heaven.

REVIEW

1. Give the text of Scripture showing that priests have authority to teach.
2. How do the teaching orders get their authority?
3. Why are the teaching orders religious?
4. Explain: "It is more meritorious to impart light than to glitter."
5. How many brotherhoods are there in the United States? How many sisterhoods?
6. What has been the object of the founders of religious orders or congregations?
7. Why are the enemies of religion so anxious to control the schools?

STORY

Napoleon in exile teaching catechism.

FRUIT

Love to make God known by word and example.

SYNOPSIS

The Teaching Religious Orders

- Introduction.
  - Questions on last lesson.
  - How regarded by the Church.
- Catholic Education.
  - Opinion of great men.
  - Opinion of American Prelates.
- Catholic School System in United States.
  - Number of schools.
  - Teachers.
  - Cost of maintenance.
  - Necessity.
- Special Vocation.
  - Distinct from Priesthood.
  - Qualifications.
  - A great want.
  - Consolations.
- Fruit:—Love to make God known by word and example.

LESSON VII

SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

PART I

INTRODUCTION

1. How does the Church show her appreciation of religious teaching congregations?

2. What kind of schools are included in the Catholic system in the United States?

3. How is this system supported?

4. Name three of the teaching brotherhoods.

5. How do the Hierarchy show their zeal for Catholic education?

6. Mention a temporal recompense experienced by the religious teacher.

Alexander Pope, the poet, tells us that some men are and must be greater than the rest. In the history of nations and in that of the Church, we find this statement ever verified. There have been, there are, and there always will be men who are ready to sacrifice all they hold most dear in laboring for the betterment of mankind. A grateful world never ceases to sing their praises and to raise monuments to their honor. She calls them heroes and holds them up as worthy of imitation.

Still there are heroes and heroes. Some work solely from earthly motives; but others consider man's last end, and labor that he may attain it.

These latter are heroes indeed. Such are the apostles of Christ and the great saints of the Church, who strive to procure not merely the welfare of the body, but especially the welfare of the soul. And among these heroes and saints of the Church we may well place Saint John Baptist De La Salle.

God is ever great in all His saints; but He appeared to manifest His greatness in a very special manner in Saint De La Salle. A young priest of great promise, splendid talents, thoroughly educated, of high social standing, and the brightest light of the Church of Rheims; and yet when his worldly fame seemed assured, he gave up all to consecrate his life to the education of children.

EXPOSITION

John Baptist De La Salle was born at Rheims, France, April 30, 1651. His father, a fervent Christian, was Chancellor of State to the King of France. From his childhood De La Salle showed remarkable piety and found his greatest joy at the foot of the altar. His progress in virtue and study was so rapid that at sixteen he was made a canon of the Cathedral of Rheims. He completed his studies and graduated from the University of Rheims at the age of nineteen. Having studied theology at the seminary of Saint Sulpice, Paris, he was ordained priest on Easter Eve, 1678.

As a priest his zeal for souls was unbounded. He had the gift of converting the most hardened

sinners. He loved the poor most tenderly, and was a father and a friend to all. He practised the greatest mortification and penances, fasted much, and passed whole nights in prayer. It was by such a saintly life that Providence prepared him for his great life-work. The first proof of his apostolic zeal and executive ability was shown in the direction of a sisterhood for the education of poor girls. This good work was a legacy left him by his friend, Canon Roland. So successful was De La Salle in this, his first mission, that he soon had the new Institute firmly established and approved by the State. He then retired from its government and left all in the hands of the sisters.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. When and where was De La Salle born?

2. What position of state did his father hold?

3. For what particular quality was his childhood noted?

4. What church dignity was conferred on him at the age of sixteen?

5. When and where did he complete his studies?

6. Where did he study theology?

7. When was he ordained priest?

8. Name some of his pious practices?

9. What was his first mission of zeal for the salvation of souls? Was he successful?

EXPOSITION

But the great work and glory of De La Salle's life was the founding of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. It was in that work especially that he manifested the wisdom and goodness of Providence in securing the salvation of the little ones. It was the golden age of Louis XIV, and society in France shone with remarkable splendor. But beyond the court there was much poverty and misery. The poor were sadly neglected, and allowed to grow up in ignorance and vice. De La Salle's heart bled for them. He knew the value of souls and how much Jesus had suffered to save them. This thought decided his vocation. He resolved to devote his life to the salvation of youth. His devotedness and self-sacrifice soon attracted the attention of others; and, in a short time, he finds himself surrounded by a number of young men who wish to become his disciples. He takes them to his home and begins to train them in the art of teaching. He then opens his first schools, which meet with great success. God blesses the work and all goes well.

After some time, however, there is a famine in the country and De La Salle's disciples become discontented and show signs of distrust. They know that he is rich and they are poor. They are solicitous about their future support. Their reliance on Providence is shaken and the schools are apparently doomed. This is the great mo-

ment in De La Salle's life, the moment in which his heroism is put to the test. It is evident that, if he wishes to hold his disciples, he must become as one of them, even as poor as they. Looking into the future he beholds thousands of souls beseeching him not to abandon them. The sacrifice is great; but not too great for his generosity and zeal. He sells all his property, gives the price to the poor, and says to his disciples: "Fear not; henceforth we rely on Providence for support, and we will not be disappointed." Such was the beginning of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. What was the great work of De La Salle's life?
2. What perfections of God are manifest in this work?
3. Who reigned in France at this time?
4. What was the condition of society?
5. To what evils were the children of the poor exposed?
6. How did De La Salle express his sympathy for the children of the poor?
7. How did his zeal and devotedness affect others?
8. How did he utilize his disciples?
9. What great difficulty did he experience during the famine?
10. How did he overcome it?
11. How did he express his reliance on Providence after giving his riches to the poor?

REFLECTION

In reading the lives of the saints, you will see that they were noted for great confidence in God. Even under the greatest difficulties their trust in God was unshaken. "Although He should kill me," said Job, "I will trust in Him" (Job, xiii, 15).

You will also notice that God frequently demanded some great sacrifice to try their faith in Him. St. De La Salle was no exception. With him it was either social position, fortune, and worldly honor; or poverty, and labor endured for God. On his choice depended souls. That was sufficient to settle his decision. He knew that Providence would supply the means of success. Whenever, boys, during life it is a question of right or wrong, of sin or virtue, or a greater good, let your love of God decide.

MEMORY GEMS

1. *"Intellectual, moral, and religious education is the highest human work that can be performed" (Bishop Dupanloup).*

2. *"O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God!" (Rom., xi., 33).*

3. *"To speak a word in due time is like apples of gold on beds of silver" (Prov., xxv., 1).*

ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

PART II

EXPOSITION

As an educator, St. De La Salle was far in advance of his day. Pope Pius IX aptly remarked that St. De La Salle's work was destined rather for our day than his own.

There have, no doubt, been great improvements in modern education. But many of these improvements were anticipated by St. De La Salle more than 200 years ago. Froebel receives credit for having introduced object lessons; but St. De La Salle used them two hundred years ago. "Lancaster, Pestalozzi and others," says Frere Lucard, "deserve well of the people; but St. De La Salle in his 'School Management' will be found to have introduced all that is good in their methods and much more that their experience never discovered." As to Lancaster, a school committee in its report to the English Parliament, used the following words: "Had we known the system of the Christian Brothers (St. De La Salle's) Lancasterian methods would never have been tolerated in our schools."

St. De La Salle was the first to make the mother tongue the basis of instruction. By the old system the pupil was obliged to study the Latin language before his own. St. De La Salle saw the waste of time and unnecessary labor in such a

plan, and in spite of opposition he made the change for the better. He also introduced the mutual simultaneous method instead of the individual. While St. De La Salle was not the first to discover the simultaneous method, he was the first to make a practical application of it in the classroom. Teachers and pupils today take it as a matter of fact, and give little thought to its advantages when compared to the old individual method. St. De La Salle was likewise the founder of primary schools properly so-called. He was the inaugurator of Normal Schools (Rheims 1684), Technical Schools and Schools of Design (Paris 1689), Boarding Schools, Colleges for the wealthy, and Agricultural Colleges.

In pedagogics no man ever exercised a greater influence. For forty years he labored in the science of teaching, and as a result, he established and handed down the principles by which he revolutionized education. These principles are embodied in the methods of the Brothers followed throughout the world. In his "Theory of Social Order," De Bonald calls St. De La Salle a hero in the eyes of the political world, and his Institute a masterpiece of wisdom and of the knowledge of man. To encourage young men to join our Institute, Francis Thompson speaks thus: "To be the sons of him, who, two centuries ago, forestalled the educational reformers in France, England, and the New World, is no mean calling" (Life and Labors St. De La Salle).

Many writers on the history of education and modern pedagogy, either through ignorance or prejudice, fail to give St. De La Salle the credit and honor due him. They speak of the psychological aspects of education as things of recent origin. If they had read the works of St. De La Salle attentively, they would have found that, in the principles enunciated and the methods to be employed, the mind of the child is never lost sight of. The child is regarded as a living soul, and not as a walking automaton. As an instance, "interest," a so-called modern discovery, was duly appreciated and utilized by St. De La Salle and his disciples nearly 250 years ago. In his "School Government" he insists on his young teachers becoming familiar with the ways and means of exciting and holding the interest of the pupils. But this interest is not to exclude self-help or self-reliance, as it does too frequently today.

"It is fortunate for the teaching profession," says Brother Aileran Edward, Professor of English in Manhattan College, "that St. De La Salle has left us his knowledge of pedagogy in his admirable and epoch-making treatise, 'The Management of the Christian Schools,' a book which solves many perplexing problems for the teacher, whether in the college, the academy, or the elementary school. This precious handbook gives clear, concise, and practical rules for securing discipline and imparting instruction. The rules given bespeak an abundance of practical good

sense and reveal an intimate knowledge of boy nature. The value of this priceless manual has been aptly stated by Matthew Arnold: 'Later works on the subject,' says he, 'have little improved the precepts, while they entirely lack the unction.' "

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. How did Pius IX praise St. De La Salle as an educator?
2. Mention three educational improvements anticipated by St. De La Salle.
3. Who receives the credit for having introduced object lessons?
4. How did the English School Committee express their regret after prescribing the Lancasterian methods for English schools?
5. What advantage is there in using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction?
6. What is the simultaneous method?
7. Name some of the different kinds of schools inaugurated by St. De La Salle.
8. Do modern writers on pedagogy give him due credit for his improvements? Give an instance.
9. What did Matthew Arnold say about St. De La Salle's work on "School Management"?

EXPOSITION

If St. De La Salle did so much for the education of youth, it was greatly owing to his sanctity. God loved him and blessed his work. He gave

him the light to see the great evils of society and the genius to supply the remedy. On his part, St. De La Salle corresponded faithfully to God's holy will. He practised virtue in an eminent degree. His very presence bespoke humility, charity, sweetness and piety. He was the model of youth by his innocent life, his angelic purity, his love of study, and his fidelity in following his vocation. He was strongly attached to the imitation of Our Lord and His Blessed Mother. His life offers many examples of patience, forgiveness of injuries, love of prayer and a great devotion to the Holy Eucharist. The trials, contradictions, calumnies, and persecutions undergone in the accomplishment of his great work, were almost continual. His labors were incredible. He generally travelled on foot, slept on the bare ground and fasted rigorously. He was often in danger of death from overwork, excessive austerities, and violent heretics. His only consolation was, at the end of the day, to repose at the foot of the altar.

Notwithstanding his many trials and difficulties, he never lost patience or trust in Providence. He placed implicit reliance on God's word; and, therefore, his faith was as simple as it was unbounded. On one occasion his community had no bread. He went to the chapel, knelt before the tabernacle and said: "Lord we have no bread." The bell rings and a basket of bread is found at the door. On another occasion he undertakes a long journey to see a brother who is dying. He

embraces the sick brother who, to the astonishment of all, immediately recovers.

But at length St. De La Salle's strength gives way. He can work no more. God is well pleased with his labors and is about to give him the crown of life. His death is as happy as it is edifying. He knows that his Institute is firmly established, and that, as a consequence, many souls will follow him to heaven. He blesses his disciples and recommends them to have an ardent love for the Blessed Sacrament, a great devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin, and an unswerving attachment to Rome. He dies at Rouen on Good Friday, the first Friday of the month of April, 1719. The people exclaim, "The Saint is dead!" And the Church, a few years ago, confirmed their opinion of his sanctity.

St. De La Salle's canonization took place on May 24, 1900. The ceremony was attended with a world-wide interest and devotion. From the remotest corners of the earth flocked innumerable friends and patrons of the Order to pay their tribute of affectionate homage to the great Teacher Saint. The process of his canonization had been commenced by Pope Gregory XVI, and continued by Pius IX. But it was the privilege of Pope Leo XIII, as a crowning act of his labors for Catholic education, to solemnly "proclaim that John Baptist De La Salle, Priest, Founder of The Congregation of the Christian Schools, is among the number of Holy Confessors."

St. De La Salle is then the Teacher Saint, the pioneer in popular education, the father of modern pedagogy, the model of Christian teachers, the patron of Christian Schools, and the protector of youth.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. Why was St. De La Salle able to do so much for the education of youth?
2. Name some of the virtues for which he was remarkable.
3. What sufferings did he endure?
4. How did he travel?
5. What was his only consolation?
6. Give an instance showing his simple faith; another manifesting his miraculous power.
7. When and by what Pope was he canonized?

REFLECTION

These, my dear boys, are the leading facts in the life of our great saint. Knowing them you cannot but admire such a life. And admiration leads to imitation. We cannot study or admire goodness without becoming better. I am convinced that many of you in listening to me, have said in the depths of your heart: "Oh! how beautiful! how I would like to have lived with St. De La Salle!" Well, he was many years ahead of you. But you can still live with him. You can still take part in the great work that he started. If God does not call you to such a high degree of perfection, all of you can at least imitate our Saint in his love for the poor and his

zeal for the salvation of souls. Some of you may even receive the invitation to join his disciples. If so favored, pray that you may be able to make the sacrifices God requires. You can do nothing more pleasing to Our Lord, or more meritorious for yourself, than to show little children the way to heaven. Our Divine Master has said: "Suffer the little children to come unto me"; and again, "those that instruct many unto justice, shall be called great, and shall shine like stars for all eternity" (Mark, x, 14; Matt., v, 19; Dan., xii, 3).

REVIEW

1. For what were the childhood and youth of St. De La Salle remarkable?

2. How did he show his zeal as a priest?

3. What was his great life-work?

4. What was his object in founding such an Institute?

5. How did he train his first disciples?

6. By what great sacrifice did he secure their perseverance?

7. How did St. De La Salle show his genius as an educator?

8. How does he surpass Lancaster and Pestalozzi in pedagogical improvements?

9. Mention some of the different kinds of schools inaugurated by St. De La Salle.

10. What practical experience did he have in teaching?

11. State two of his principles of teaching.

12. How was St. De La Salle a social reformer?

13. How did he show his application of psychology to teaching?

14. How did he utilize interest?

15. Why did he not exclude effort in study?

16. What was the great motive power in all St. De La Salle's work?

17. Name some of his virtues.

18. How is he the model of youth?

STORY

A little shepherd boy finding his work wearisome, asked his pastor for a good book to read. He received the "Life of St. De La Salle." As he read page after page, he became greatly impressed by the account of the virtue and zeal of St. De La Salle. The instruction of little children, as imparted by the Saint, pleased the young shepherd very much. He considered it a great work, and he resolved to imitate St. De La Salle and become a Brother. A short time after he entered the Order; and in a few years he became an excellent teacher and a very good religious.

In the vocation of this little shepherd boy, we have one among many examples of the effect of good reading. God often makes use of a good book, especially the life of a saint, to enable the reader to see the good that others have done, and to encourage him to do likewise. Therefore, boys, don't ignore good, pious books. They are angels in disguise, and may bring you a message from heaven.

FRUIT

Resolve to save some souls.

SYNOPSIS

Saint John Baptist De La Salle

- Introduction.
  - Questions on last lesson.
  - St. De La Salle a true hero.
- Early Life.
  - Great student.
  - Zealous priest.
  - Founded the "Brothers of the Christian Schools."
- Great Educator.
  - Made mother tongue medium of instruction.
  - Introduced simultaneous method.
  - Established many kinds of schools.
  - Applied principles of psychology.
  - Left great work called "The Management of Christian Schools."
- Sanctity.
  - Many virtues.
  - Great spirit of faith.
  - Model for youth.
  - Holy death and canonization.

Fruit:—Resolve to save some souls.

LESSON VIII

THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

PART I

INTRODUCTION

1. When and where was St. De La Salle born?
2. How is he a model for youth?
3. What was his principal virtue as a priest?
4. To what was his success as an educator due?
5. Give one of his great changes in teaching.
6. Show that his Institute was a success during his life.

Last week, boys, I gave you a short sketch of the wonderful life and work of St. De La Salle. Today I wish to give you an account of the Institute which he founded. As pupils of the Brothers, it is only proper that you should know something of the history of their Congregation.

EXPOSITION

The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is a religious Congregation devoted to the Christian education of youth, and especially of poor children. "It is a society to safeguard the child, by protecting him against himself" (Thompson). It teaches him self-restraint and obedience to law. It was founded by St. De La Salle in 1680. Its origin is attributed to the prayers of a pious association estab-

lished about the middle of the 17th century, for the purpose of obtaining from heaven Christian teachers for the children of the poor.

The object of this Institute, says St. De La Salle, in his rule, is the Christian education of youth. For this purpose the Brothers teach school, in order that, having the children under their care during the day, they may teach them to live well. They instruct them in the principles of our holy religion and the Christian maxims. They also give them a suitable secular education.

The necessity of this Institute is very great. Many parents cannot instruct or educate their children. They are generally too busy with their work during the day, and in the evening, even when they have time, many are indifferent or wanting in the necessary knowledge. As a consequence the children are left to themselves, or sent to a secular school from which all religious truth is excluded. We can easily imagine the result. These children grow up ignorant of God and their last end. They acquire bad habits which it is almost impossible to correct in after life. It is thus that the great evils of society originate and many souls are lost. St. De La Salle foresaw that the only preventative of these disorders was the Christian education of youth.

This is as true today, boys, as it was in St. De La Salle's day. There is no education without God. Our own public school system gives ample proof. With all the advantages that money can procure, it is still wanting in the training of

character. All thinking men admit the fact; but fail to agree on the remedy. Hence a Catholic who says that the public schools, or non-religious colleges, are good enough for his children, utters an excuse for ignorance and want of faith.

Inspired by God, the holy Founder understood from the beginning that, in order to perpetuate his society, it was necessary to bind its members together by the obligations of the religious life. For this purpose, in 1684, having previously disposed of his riches, he and twelve of his principal Brothers made the vows of stability and obedience. It was only then that the Congregation was definitely founded.

As the society gradually grew into a fixed religious body, the vows were increased to five. Besides the ordinary vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, the Brothers also make the vow of stability and the vow of teaching gratuitously. By the vow of stability they promise to remain in the Institute for the time mentioned in the vow. By the vow of teaching gratuitously they promise to teach the children of the poor without remuneration.

St. De La Salle labored as a Brother for forty years. Notwithstanding his reluctance and frequent attempts to resign, the Brothers insisted on him holding the office of Superior till a few years before his death. He established many schools in which Brothers formed according to his methods, gave many thousand children a thorough Christian education. When he died he left twenty-seven houses and nearly three hun-

dred Brothers imbued with the spirit of their holy Founder and filled with zeal for the salvation of souls.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. Why is the society of the Brothers a religious congregation?

2. To whom is its origin attributed?

3. How do the Brothers attain their object?

4. What two kinds of instruction do they give their pupils?

5. Why is the work of the Brothers so necessary?

6. How do the great evils of society originate?

7. What was St. De La Salle's preventative of these disorders?

8. When was the Institute of the Brothers definitely founded?

9. How was its perpetuity secured?

10. How long did St. De La Salle labor as a member?

11. What progress had the society made at his death?

REFLECTION

In the Gospel it is related that on one occasion when a number of little children were crowding about Our Lord, and the Apostles were driving them away, Our Saviour rebuked the Apostles and said: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Mark, x, 14). There, boys, you have the secret of the success of the Broth-

ers' work. If you ask why so many young men have joined our society from St. De La Salle's time to the present, you have the answer in that one sentence, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me." These young men loved Our Lord, and they saw that the best way to express that love is to cause the little ones also to love Him. Well, boys, in your serious moments, during your fervent prayers and especially after Holy Communion, ask Our Lord what is the best way to show your love for Him. Say with St. Paul: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts, ix, 6).

EXPOSITION

The organization of the Brothers' society is very simple. It is governed by a Superior-General elected for life. He has twelve Assistants to aid him in the administration of details. The Institute is divided into a number of districts each comprising a certain number of houses or schools. Each of these districts is under the direction of a Brother Visitor, subject to the orders of the Superior-General. At the head of each house is a Brother Director, assisted by a Sub-Director, both under the control of the Brother Visitor. In each district there are houses of formation, called the Junior Novitiate, the Senior Novitiate, and the Scholasticate. In the United States such Novitiates are located at Pocantico Hills, N. Y., Ammendale, Md., Glencoe, Mo., Martinez, Cal., and Las Vegas, N. M.

To become a brother, a boy or young man must go through some years of formation. In

the first place, to be accepted, he must be physically, mentally, and morally fit. He must have no bodily infirmity or disease; he must be fairly talented; and his moral and religious character must be above reproach. The Brothers sometimes receive young men who wish to become religious, but who are not qualified to teach. Such members are trained to take charge of the temporal affairs of the houses. "They are employed at the temporal work for which they are best adapted; and they lead a life of prayer, humility and obedience."

On entering each one presents his baptismal and confirmation certificate, a letter of recommendation from his Pastor, a letter from the Bishop of the diocese, and another from the Bishop of each diocese in which he has lived more than a year after attaining his fourteenth year. When under seventeen years of age the candidate is placed in the Junior Novitiate. With a view to his future vocation, he is thoroughly instructed in the elementary branches of science and the principles of religion. When he has reached the required age of seventeen, if sufficiently instructed and otherwise worthy, he is advanced to the Senior Novitiate, where, in due time, he receives the religious habit. During the following year he is instructed in the principles of the religious life and the rules of the Institute. His sole endeavor at this time is to get rid of the spirit of the world and to acquire the spirit of faith, which is the great spirit of the Brothers. According to their rule, "they are not to look upon

anything but with the eyes of faith, not to do anything but in view of God, and to attribute all to God."

From the Senior Novitiate, the novice passes into the Scholasticate, or Normal Training School. Here he receives the instruction necessary for a teacher. He studies the principles of pedagogy, the methods of the Brothers, and the art of imparting both scientific and religious truth. Thus carefully trained, the young Brother takes charge of a class and begins his life-work under the direction of an experienced Inspector.

At the end of his novitiate this young soldier of Christ, in order to secure his vocation against inconstancy, consecrates himself to God by the holy vows of religion. These vows are at first only temporary, but renewable. When the subject has attained the age required by the laws of the Church and the rules of the Institute, he makes perpetual vows. He is then a Brother in the full sense of the word, and that for life.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. How is the Brothers' society governed?
2. How is it divided?
3. What is the head of each house called?
4. What houses of formation does each district possess?
5. Where are those of the Baltimore district located? Those of the New York district?
6. What qualifications must a young man have to enter the Institute?

7. What mental ability is required?

8. What papers must he present?

9. How long does a young man remain in the Junior Novitiate?

10. How long in the Senior Novitiate?

11. How is the novice occupied in the Senior Novitiate?

12. What instruction does he receive in the Normal School?

13. When is he allowed to make vows?

14. What kind of vows does he make first?

15. When does he make perpetual vows?

REFLECTION

As you have just heard, boys, it takes some time to make a brother. But it is the same in all the professions. You cannot make a doctor or a lawyer over night. But that need not trouble a young man wishing to become a brother. God regards the intention more than the deed. The good novice is always happy in his preliminary work and preparation for the final act by which he consecrates himself to God forever.

MEMORY GEMS

1. "The little ones have asked for bread, and there was none to break it unto them" (Lam., iv, 4).

2. A Catholic who says that the public schools, or non-religious colleges, are good enough for his children, utters an excuse for ignorance and want of faith.

THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

PART II

EXPOSITION

The Institute of the Brothers has existed for about two hundred and forty years. Since their foundation, many other teaching orders have been established, both of Brothers and Sisters. But, as St. De La Salle's biographers remark, his Society was their model. Although St. De La Salle's Brothers are frequently called Christian Brothers, their proper name is Brothers of the Christian Schools, and they are the only Religious Congregation approved by the Church under that title.

They received the Bull of approbation from Pope Benedict XIII, January 26, 1725. France authorized them to open schools by letters patent under Louis XV and Louis XVI. These two approvals greatly favored the extension of the Brothers' schools. As a consequence, their growth was so rapid that, at the beginning of the French Revolution, there were one hundred and twenty-three houses, nine hundred and twenty Brothers and thirty-six thousand pupils.

For many years the Institute thus prospered, not only in France, but in many other countries of Europe. Nevertheless, like all great works, it was

destined to excite the envy and the hatred of many. The Calvinists hated the Brothers because they did much good for the Church. And, strange to say, the philosophers of France asked the king to banish the Brothers because they educated the people, especially the poor. In spite of opposition, however, the Christian Schools continued to thrive and multiply extensively until the Revolution.

During the Revolution the Brothers were dispersed because they refused to take the civil oath. Some of them were sent to the scaffold, and others to the prison ships. The Superior-General, Brother Agathon, was put in prison. However the Brothers managed to keep open two houses in Italy, one in Rome and the other in Orvieto. After the Revolution the Brothers were re-established by Napoleon the First. From that time to the expulsion of all religious from France in 1901, the Institute had increased to twelve hundred houses, 16,000 members, and 400,000 pupils, spread over the whole world. In the United States alone, although introduced only about seventy years ago, there are today about twelve hundred Brothers teaching thirty-five thousand pupils.

The Franco-Prussian War, 1870, afforded another test of the Brothers' heroism and patriotism. They turned their schools into hospitals and they themselves acted as nurses, some of them even sacrificing their life in the work or on the battle-field.

One would imagine that the French Government would show some gratitude to an Institute that had done so much for the country. But neither the devil nor his satellites reason that way. In October, 1886, these French infidels passed a law evicting the Brothers from all official teaching. That was only the beginning of the persecution. In 1901 the Brothers were obliged to close nearly all their schools and, with the other religious orders, to leave France. Nothing daunted by this base ingratitude, they opened schools in many other countries. Some of them came to the United States and Canada. Many of the younger members, unable to leave France, were secularized, living in hopes of better days. In the late war (1918) there were 2,000 Brothers fighting the battles of France; and about 240 were killed or wounded. This, boys, is an outline of the work of the Brothers down to the present time.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. How old is the Institute of the Brothers?
2. What relation has it had with other teaching orders?
3. What is the proper title of the Brothers?
4. When and by what Pope were they made a religious Congregation?
5. Under what kings of France were they authorized to teach?
6. Mention the principal enemies of the Brothers' work before the Revolution.

7. How did the Brothers fare during the Revolution?

8. Were they entirely suppressed? Explain.

9. Who re-established the Institute?

10. How did the Brothers show their heroism during the Franco-Prussian War?

11. How has the French Government treated the Brothers since?

REFLECTION

Very likely, boys, you think it very strange that a society which does so much good should be so persecuted. But you must remember that the devil and the world are opposed to Jesus Christ and those who work for Him. Our Lord foretold that, as He was hated and persecuted, His disciples would suffer the same fate. This prophecy has been verified in the Apostles, the early martyrs, and the different religious orders ever since. Still the history of the Church tells us that while God permits these persecutions for the merit of His saints, He does not allow His enemies to go too far. In spite of their efforts, the Church and her religious orders always triumph. He has said: "Upon this rock I will build My Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt., xvi, 18).

Some years ago when Bismarck was persecuting the Catholic Church in Germany, one of our New York papers printed a caricature of him and the devil. Bismarck was represented as tugging at a long rope attached to the steeple of a Cath-

olic church. The devil, looking on, accosts him thus: "Say, friend, you are wasting time; I've been at that job for over two thousand years, and I haven't succeeded yet."

So persecution should not prevent any one from entering a religious order. He is truly a coward, who is unwilling to suffer for Christ. If a soldier cheerfully gives his life for his country, how can a Christian refuse to sacrifice his for the love of his Savior? You know, boys, that life is short and full of miseries, even for the most prosperous. You also feel, as young as you are, that true happiness is not found here, but in the next life. Why then not work for this future happiness? Why hesitate to help others to do likewise?

REVIEW

1. What is the object of the Brothers' society?
2. Why is this work very important?
3. How do the great evils of society originate?
4. Why did St. De La Salle and his Brothers make their first vows?
5. How many Brothers and schools were there at the death of St. De La Salle?
6. How many Brothers are there in the United States?
7. How many pupils have they under their care?
8. Name some of the officers of the society.
9. Where are their houses of formation located in this country?

10. What are the qualifications required of a young man wishing to become a Brother?

11. When does he receive the habit?

12. What is the great spirit of the Brothers' Institute?

13. How does that spirit affect their actions?

14. When does a young Brother make his first vows?

15. Name these vows.

16. How does the Church regard the Brothers' Society?

17. Why did the philosophers wish to banish the Brothers from France?

18. How has the French government treated the Brothers since 1886?

STORY

Short account of Brother Philip's Vocation, or that of Brother Brendan Amedy.

FRUIT

Love to spread religious truth.

MEMORY GEMS

1. "They that instruct many unto justice, shall shine as stars for all eternity" (Dan., xii, 3).

2. St. Thomas says that it is more meritorious to impart light than to glitter; and that the occupation of teaching and of leading others to virtue is more estimable than martyrdom.

3. "Build the school and the Church will build itself" (Archbishop Hughes).

SYNOPSIS

The Brothers of the Christian Schools.

- Introduction.
  - Questions on last lesson.
  - A Religious Congregation.
- Institution.
  - Great object.
  - Necessity.
- Organization.
  - Government and divisions.
  - Novitiates and formation.
- Progress.
  - During life of Founder.
  - Down to the French Revolution.
  - At the present time.
- Persecution.
  - By Calvinists and Philosophers.
  - During the Revolution.
  - Since the Revolution.
- Fruit:—Love to spread religious truth.

LESSON IX

THE COMMON OR MARRIED STATE

(Reserved for High School and College)

PART I

INTRODUCTION

1. What is the object of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools?

2. How does the work of the Brothers greatly prevent the evils of society?

3. What is wanting in our public school system?

4. What two particular vows did St. De La Salle and his first Brothers make?

5. How many Brothers did St. De La Salle leave when he died?

6. What formation must young men go through in order to become Brothers?

7. What is the spirit of faith?

8. How can an ordinary Catholic practise the spirit of faith?

9. Mention some of the persecutions which the Brothers' Society has undergone.

10. Is the prospect of persecution a good reason for not joining a religious order? Why not?

In our course of catechism on vocation, boys, you have learned that there are four states of life, or kinds of vocation; viz., the secular priest-

hood, the religious state, the state of virginity, and the married state. But we may divide men into two classes, according as they follow the married or the unmarried state of life. In the first class are found the great majority of mankind. God asks of them only the common, ordinary Christian service of the faithful in the world. To the second class belong those who accept the invitation to a higher or privileged service. The latter assume greater obligations, but, on the other hand, enjoy very special advantages. Both these conditions of life are open to all, and are approved by God. Each one is free to choose whichever state he wishes. St. Basil speaks as follows: "At the opening of his career every one is allowed to desire and embrace the kind of life to which he aspires, provided it be a licit kind of life. Every one is free to marry or lead a life of celibacy." (Quoted by Berthier.)

You have heard me praise the priesthood and the religious state very highly. I have told you that this higher service is the most pleasing to God, and calculated to draw down His choicest blessings upon those who render it. But you must not, on that account, conclude that I wished to belittle the common or married state; or that I would have you believe that the highest virtue or perfection cannot be attained therein. Sanctity may be attained in any state of life. And many of the greatest saints became such in the married state. Witness the patriarchs of the old

law; St. Joseph, St. Joachim, St. Anne, St. Monica, St. Elizabeth, St. Louis, King of France, and many other saints in the new law. "It is, therefore, a mistake," says Father Lelen, "to regard this common life as ignoble and unworthy. They strangely err, who, to exalt the religious state, take delight in humbling the heights of the home. Blessed are the fathers and mothers around whom you see a living crown of children. Family life is a holy life, and our parents deserve our utmost respect" ("Towards the Sanctuary").

EXPOSITION

It is very likely, boys, that some of you have assisted at the celebration of a wedding. You will recall that it was an event of great joy, not only for the married couple, but also for the invited guests. And so it is always, when weddings are celebrated according to the laws of the Church. God is well pleased with such celebrations. Our Lord Himself was pleased to assist at the Wedding in Cana, to sanction such events and to raise matrimony to the dignity of a sacrament. St. Paul calls it a great sacrament. "This is a great sacrament, but I speak in Christ and in the Church" (Ephes., v, 31, 32). Therefore, like all the other sacraments, it must be received with the proper dispositions.

In the Catechism matrimony is defined as a sacrament instituted by Our Lord Jesus Christ to sanctify the lawful union of man and woman,

and to give them the graces necessary for their state. God instituted marriage in the garden of Eden when He created Eve and gave her to Adam as a companion; and, as stated above, Our Lord raised it to the dignity of a sacrament at the wedding in Cana.

The matter of this sacrament is the mutual consent of the couple to give themselves to each other, and the form is the mutual consent to take each other. This consent must be true, expressed by outward signs, refer to the present time, and be voluntary. While the parents' consent is not necessary for the validity of the marriage, it would be unlawful for minors to marry without it, unless their refusal were unjust.

Matrimony has two attributes; viz., unity and perpetuity. Unity means one man and one woman; and perpetuity that the bond of marriage can be broken only by death. The Church never grants a divorce, nor does she recognize those granted by the civil authority. "What therefore God has joined together," says Our Lord in the Gospel, "let no man put asunder" (Matt., xix, 6). For lawful reasons, such as serious injury to body or soul, or adultery, the Church may grant a separation; but neither the husband nor the wife can marry again till the death of the other.

Mixed marriages or marriages of Catholics with heretics, are also forbidden. The Pope alone for weighty reasons, can grant a dispensation for such marriages.

At times the Church is criticized for her laws regarding marriage. But the experience of ages proves her wisdom in establishing these laws. They are, as it were, the great bulwark protecting society from the ignorance and the passions of men. Divorce alone, if unchecked, would be sufficient to destroy civilization and lead men back to barbarism. Hence the Church is absolutely opposed to it, and her Popes are ever ready to suffer death sooner than grant a divorce. The history of England gives a striking example in the person of King Henry VIII. When the Pope refused him a divorce, the king started schism in England, proclaiming himself the head of the church in that country. He carried on a violent persecution against the clergy and all who would not recognize his claim, drove the religious from their monasteries, confiscated their property, and did all in his power to destroy the authority of Rome in England. Notwithstanding these terrible evils, the Pope, while deploring them, would never accede to the king's wishes.

Mixed marriages are forbidden because of the danger to the faith of the Catholic party. When such marriages are permitted by dispensation, the Church requires a mutual agreement that the children shall be brought up in the Catholic religion. She also insists that the Catholic party be absolutely free to practise his or her religion; and further, that the Catholic labor for the conversion of the non-Catholic. But this agreement

is seldom kept; and, as a consequence, the children are generally lost to the Church. It is the experience of our missionaries that 60 per cent of the children of mixed marriages are lost to the faith.

Yes, boys; one of the greatest evils against which the Church has to contend today is mixed marriages. No wonder our bishops and priests are so strongly opposed to them. They know the sad consequences of these marriages, the loss of faith, divorce, and the many other results that are so detrimental to the salvation of souls. It is said that the late Cardinal Farley of New York, would never assist at a mixed marriage, no matter what social standing the couple might have. It was thus he emphasized his disapproval.

Catholic parents, especially some of the wealthier class, are greatly responsible for mixed marriages. Actuated by worldly views and ambitious for worldly prestige, they expose their sons and daughters to the greatest danger in this respect. They patronize Protestant and non-Catholic schools and colleges. They allow their children to take part in the frivolties of the so-called elite of society. It matters little what temptations and spiritual dangers these innocent souls may encounter, as long as they make a name for themselves and their families. It is not surprising, therefore, that such flagrant disobedience to the laws of the Church is frequently punished by scandal and disgrace.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. What does St. Paul call matrimony?

2. How did Our Lord sanction the celebration of marriage?

3. Is it possible to attain perfection in the married state? How so?

4. Give an example from the lives of the saints.

5. Define the sacrament of Matrimony.

6. When was it instituted?

7. What is the difference between the matter and the form of this sacrament?

8. What is meant by the unity of matrimony?

9. What is meant by the perpetuity of matrimony?

10. Why does the Church forbid divorce?

11. Can those who are lawfully separated, marry again?

12. Why are mixed marriages forbidden?

13. How do some Catholic parents encourage mixed marriages?

14. By what two great evils are Catholic families often punished for encouraging mixed marriages?

REFLECTION

From the bottom of my heart, boys, I hope and pray that none of you may ever experience the misfortune of a mixed marriage. Yes; with a few exceptions, it is a misfortune, and a great

misfortune, no matter what temporal advantages it may afford. Don't be persuaded by what others have done; or by the apparent happiness of others. Listen to the bishops and priests of the Church. They do not exaggerate; nor do they wish to frighten you. All they tell you on this subject is sound Catholic doctrine and the experience of ages. I have already told you that no one can compel you to enter the married state. Neither can any one oblige you to marry a particular person. In this matter, as in deciding on any vocation, you are entirely free. Even your parents can not interfere; and if they should, you are not bound to obey. Above all, if unwisely, they should wish you to enter a mixed marriage, you are bound in conscience to disobey. You may tell them with St. Paul: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts, v, 29). But the great means to prevent you from being led astray is to avoid the occasions, especially dangerous companions and associations.

EXPOSITION

Besides forbidding divorce and mixed marriages, the Church has also established certain impediments or obstacles to a lawful marriage. These impediments are of two kinds: diriment, which render the marriage null; and prohibitory, which make it unlawful. Diriment impediments can be established only by the Pope; but bishops may establish certain prohibitory impediments.

The principal diriment impediments are: (1) Lack of age, intelligence, or liberty; (2) An existing marriage, holy orders or a solemn vow of chastity; (3) Natural, legal or spiritual relationship; (4) Affinity; (5) Difference of religion; that is, between a baptized person and one who is not baptized. If one of the parties be a Catholic and the other a schismatic or a heretic, the marriage is only unlawful; and (6) Secrecy.

Natural relationship exists between parent and child, or brother and sister. In the first case, the impediment extends to all degrees; but, in the second, only to the third inclusive.

Legal relationship is that which is established by adoption; that is, the legal act by which a person who is not a son or daughter by nature, is nevertheless taken and treated as such.

The degrees of legal relationship are: (1) Between the person who adopts and the one who is adopted, or the children of the latter; (2) Between the person adopted and the children of the adopter; (3) Between either party and the wife, or husband of the other.

Spiritual relationship exists (1) between the sponsor and the person who receives baptism; (2) between the person who baptizes and the one baptized.

Affinity is the relationship which husband and wife each contract with the relatives of the other.

The prohibitory impediments are: (1) the prohibition of the Church; (2) the forbidden times; from the first Sunday of Advent to Christmas

Day inclusive, and from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday inclusive; (3) the unbroken engagement of one of the contracting parties to a third person; (4) a simple vow of chastity, or a vow to enter religion, or to take holy orders.

Matrimony may be contracted at any time of the year; but the solemn blessing of the nuptials cannot be given during the forbidden times.

There is a general prohibition of the Church to contract marriage: (1) with a heretic; (2) without having the banns published; and (3) for minors, without the consent of their parents.

Since Pentecost, 1918, the marriage legislation includes the following points: (1) No marriage is valid unless it be performed by a priest duly authorized, and before at least two witnesses; (2) a marriage of two Catholics, or between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic, by a civil magistrate, an alderman, notary public, or Protestant minister, is henceforth null and void; (3) no marriage is licit or lawful unless performed by the pastor of the bride, unless a just cause excuse, or by a priest delegated by him, or by the bishop of the diocese; (4) nor without correct information as to date and place of baptism.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. What is an impediment to marriage?

2. Mention two diriment impediments; two prohibitory.

3. Between whom does natural relationship exist?

4. What is the difference between legal and spiritual relationship?

5. When may matrimony be contracted?

6. Is the consent of parents necessary for marriage? Explain.

7. May two Catholics, or a Catholic and a non-Catholic be married by a civil magistrate or a Protestant minister? Explain.

8. What is the difference between a marriage that is unlawful, and one that is null and void?

9. Who must be present at a valid marriage?

10. Define affinity.

MEMORY GEMS

1. "Happy marriages are made in heaven."

2. "House and riches are given by parents: but a prudent wife is properly from the Lord" (Pv., xix, 14).

3. "Be it ever so humble, there is no place like home."

4. "What therefore God has joined together," says Our Lord in the Gospel, "let no man put asunder" (Matt., xix, 6).

THE COMMON OR MARRIED STATE

PART II

EXPOSITION

The Church has not only the power to establish impediments to marriage, she also has the power to dispense from them, except those of the natural and the divine law, like the bond of a previous marriage, violence, etc.

The Pope can dispense from all ecclesiastical impediments, whether annulling or prohibitory.

Bishops can dispense from certain annulling impediments in their own diocese, and from prohibitory impediments, except those which arise from a vow of perpetual chastity, a vow to enter religion, and from difference of religion between a Catholic and a heretic. When the Church grants a dispensation, it is customary to require an alms from those who can afford it.

If an impediment be discovered only after marriage, the couple must live in continency until they obtain a dispensation.

When the faithful hear the banns of a marriage announced, if they know of any impediment they are bound to make it known to the proper authority.

The civil power can neither establish nor dispense from impediments regarding the faithful. Its power is limited to those effects of marriage which are not concerned with faith or morals; as,

the settlement of property, the succession of children, etc.

The ministers of this sacrament are the contracting parties; but the priest is the indispensable witness and gives the nuptial blessing.

Marriage is free to all who have no impediment; but no one is obliged to marry, or to marry any particular person.

In the catechism we are told that marriages often prove unhappy; because persons enter that holy state from unworthy motives or with guilty consciences. Matrimony, being a sacrament of the living, must be received in the state of grace. The ends in view should be those which God had in instituting it; viz., to give children to the earth, and elect to heaven; to make the joys and trials of married life a means of sanctification; and to procure for man and wife a sweet companionship and mutual assistance.

In performing the ceremony the priest reminds the couple of their obligations, questions them as to their mutual consent, bids them join their right hands, and says: "I join you together in marriage, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." He then sprinkles them with holy water, blesses the wedding ring, and says a prayer that they may be faithful to each other. At the nuptial mass, which follows the ceremony, the priest pronounces the nuptial blessing after the Pater Noster, and again at the end of the Mass, while the couple are kneeling before the altar.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. Can the Church dispense from all impediments to marriage? Why?

2. From what impediments can the Pope dispense?

3. From what impediments can bishops dispense?

4. Mention two prohibitory impediments from which bishops cannot dispense.

5. Who has power to grant a separation?

6. Are the faithful bound to make known impediments?

7. Can the civil power establish or dispense from impediments regarding the faithful?

8. What civil power regarding marriage does the Church recognize?

9. Who are the ministers of the sacrament of matrimony?

10. What is the office of the priest in the administration of matrimony?

11. Is it necessary to be in the state of grace to receive matrimony? Why?

12. For what ends did God institute this sacrament?

13. What is a nuptial mass?

14. When is the nuptial blessing given?

EXPOSITION

Before entering the holy state of marriage young people should give due consideration to its obligations. Besides purity of intention, and

prudence in selection, they must examine if they are able and ready to perform the duties required.

A true husband exercises his authority as coming from God Himself. He therefore treats his wife with gentleness and respect, and lovingly supplies all her legitimate needs. By his labor and skill he provides for the proper support of the family.

The wife ought to be submissive to her husband, modest, devoted, and industrious in the discharge of her domestic duties.

The children are to be brought up in the fear and love of God. They must receive a Christian education. Parents are responsible to God for the spiritual as well as the temporal welfare of their children.

Every Catholic family should take for its model the Holy Family at Nazareth. There God reigned supreme. The Holy Child Jesus was ever present. In the truly Catholic home there is always a distinctive, religious atmosphere. In the actions and the conversation of the parents, in the deportment of the children, even in the furnishing and the decoration of the house, there is a Catholic tone that cannot be mistaken. Morning and evening prayer, grace at meals, the recitation of the rosary in common, regular attendance at the services of the Church, and the reception of the sacraments—these are the practices that draw down the blessing of God on the Catholic home. To these families are unknown the countless troubles and misfortunes that are found in those

where God is not recognized. And it is to the children of such homes that God extends His special invitations to the higher life. It is from them that come forth our zealous brothers and sisters, our holy priests, and, in general, all our self-sacrificing religious. Instead of opposing the vocation of their children to the higher life, these parents are only too happy to give their consent and encouragement, and are grateful for the honor done them.

But these happy results of a Catholic marriage are not attained without labor and mutual sacrifice. The obligations are to be met. Sickness and poverty are always possibilities. There are days of trial and sorrow, as well as days of joy; days when Christian resignation and Christian fortitude are the only props in life. Then will appear the faithful, Christian husband and the loving, devoted wife—a couple who entered matrimony not through worldly motives, but to please God and secure their own and their children's salvation.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. What must especially be thought of before entering the married life?
2. What is meant by purity of intention in marriage?
3. What is meant by prudence in selection?
4. What are the duties of a husband towards his wife?
5. How should a wife act towards her husband?

6. How should parents bring up their children?

7. How should a Catholic family resemble the Holy Family at Nazareth?

8. Mention some of the religious practices of a good Catholic family.

9. What special blessing does God often bestow on good Catholic families?

10. Is the life of married Catholics always free from trouble?

11. What particular virtues must they practise in their trials and difficulties?

REFLECTION

I know, boys, that you are all familiar with the phrase, "Home, Sweet Home"; and those touching lines, "Be it ever so humble, there is no place like home." But you are too young to fully appreciate the meaning of those angelic thoughts. You have taken them for granted, and have innocently enjoyed the happiness that they express. Your parents, however, do know the why and the wherefore of this happiness. They will tell you that it consists in a thousand and one little things, in the daily practice of those homely virtues which God has planted in the hearts of those who love Him and try to please Him. Over the door of every truly Catholic home, might be inscribed the motto: "All for God, and nothing for self." It is the ambition of every member of such a family to make the others happy, even when the effort requires a sacrifice of ease and comfort.

It is said that "Happy Marriages are made in heaven"; that is, in accordance with God's holy will. But they also grace the earth with the most beautiful flowers of virtue in the garden of the Church. Such, my dear boys, should be the beginning and the end of every Catholic marriage.

REVIEW

1. Define Matrimony.

2. What is meant by the laws of the Church regarding Matrimony? Mention three of these laws.

3. Why are mixed marriages forbidden?

4. On what condition does the Church grant a dispensation for a mixed marriage?

5. Mention some of the causes of mixed marriages.

6. What is legal relationship?

7. Are the faithful bound to reveal impediments to marriage?

8. When is the nuptial blessing given?

9. How are the children of Catholic parents to be educated?

10. How does God favor good Catholic families in regard to vocations?

STORY

Prudence of Eliezer in choosing a wife for Isaac; or, Angel Raphael's advice to young Tobias. (Adapted.)—See Memory Gems, page 164.

FRUIT

If marriage be your vocation, ask advice, use prayer and the sacraments as a preparation, and obey the laws of the Church.

SYNOPSIS

The Common or Married State.

- **Introduction.**
  - Questions on last lesson.
  - Observance of the Commandments.
  - General Difference from Higher Service.
- **Matrimony.**
  - Definition.
  - Attributes.
  - Administration.
- **Laws of the Church.**
  - Impediments.
  - Mixed Marriages.
  - Late Decrees.
- **Obligations.**
  - Common to Both Parties.
  - Those of the Husband.
  - Those of the Wife.
- **Happy Home.**
  - Homely Virtues.
  - Religious Practices.
  - Mutual Support in Adversity.

Fruit:—To secure a happy marriage, ask advice, use prayer and the sacraments, and obey the laws of the Church.

LESSON X

THE LAY APOSTLESHIP

(Reserved for High School and College)

PART I

INTRODUCTION

1. What is the difference between the common and the higher state of life?

2. When was Matrimony made a sacrament?

3. Why are mixed marriages forbidden by the Church?

4. Mention some of the practices of a good Catholic family.

5. How should a husband exercise his authority?

In order to establish His Church, Our Lord was pleased to choose twelve Apostles, whom He instructed and to whom He gave extraordinary powers. To St. Peter He said: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt., xvi, 18, 19). His prophecy was soon fulfilled. These twelve poor fishermen with St. Peter as their chief, in a very short time, in spite of all opposition and persecution, firmly laid the foundation of the great Catholic Church.

The Apostles were men of zeal. Their hearts were on fire with the love of God. They labored much, and they suffered much, in order to bring men to the knowledge and love of Our Lord

Jesus Christ. By their teaching and example they imbued their successors with a like zeal for the salvation of souls. Even the First Christians, after they had come to the knowledge of the truth, became other apostles in their efforts to spread the Gospel. And coming down the ages, we find the faithful, in gratitude for the gift of faith, ever ready to help others thereto. Thus was instituted what we call the lay apostleship.

EXPOSITION

In the great mission of the Catholic Church there is work for all its members. The lowliest layman, as well as the most exalted clergyman, has his share to contribute to the grand work of the salvation of souls. None of us, dear boys, can go to heaven alone. We must bring others with us.

In the Gospel of St. Matthew, Chapter xxv, is related the parable of the talents.

A man going on a long journey, called his servants and gave them some pieces of money, called talents. To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to every one according to his ability. And after a long time this man returned and reckoned with his servants.

He that had received five talents, had gained other five, and he that had received two, had gained other two. But he that had received one talent, had gained nothing. He had only the original talent to return to his lord. The lord praised the first two servants, saying to each of

them: "Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

To the servant who had received one talent, but who had made no gain, the lord addressed severe reproaches. He called him a wicked and slothful servant, and ordered that the one talent be taken from him and given to him who had ten. He further banished the unprofitable servant into exterior darkness (hell) where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth.

In this parable we see that those servants who had some profit to show on the return of their master, were praised and rewarded; and that the one who had nothing but the one talent to return to his master, was condemned and punished.

Our dear Lord has given us the priceless talent of faith, and He expects us to utilize it to the greatest possible advantage for ourselves and others. It is well, therefore, for Catholic laymen to understand this truth, and to prepare for the day of reckoning.

When you hear, boys, that all Catholics are bound to labor for the salvation of souls, you may inquire how busy laymen can do so? Well, to answer that question is the purpose of this catechism on the lay apostleship. There are many, very many means by which the faithful individually and collectively may save souls.

The first, and an infallible means, is prayer. You have noticed that whenever we are asked

to pray for the intentions of the Pope, one of these intentions is nearly always the conversion of sinners and those outside the Church. From this we may learn what great confidence the Holy Father places in prayer. Prayer, then, is an easy and a sure means for all Catholics to do their part in saving souls. It is a means that may be employed at any time and in any approved form. An Our Father and a Hail Mary, three Hail Marys, the Memorare, the Litany of the Most Blessed Virgin, one or more decades of the Rosary, and other prayers found in Catholic prayer-books, may be used for that purpose. Whether your intention be the conversion of an individual, or sinners and heretics in general, a most fruitful means is to add your intention to those of the League of the Sacred Heart. But the greatest of all prayers is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is also the most efficacious prayer for the conversion of sinners. Consequently, all Catholics should make that one of their intentions in hearing Holy Mass.

When we pray for others, we must be as much in earnest as when we pray for ourselves. Our prayers ought always to be fervent, hopeful, and persevering. Many pray without attention and in fits and starts. We cannot expect such prayers to be effective. "You ask and you receive not," says St. James, "because you ask amiss" (Jas., iv, 3). As a model of earnestness and perseverance in prayer, we may recall the prayer of the blind man mentioned in the Gospel (Luke,

xviii, 35-43), or that of St. Monica, who prayed twenty years for the conversion of her son, Augustine.

Besides praying for the conversion of others, you should pray for the success of those missionaries, Priests, Brothers, and Sisters, who devote their lives to the conversion of heathen nations. In "The Annals of the Propagation of the Faith" you will find an account of the sufferings and the heroism of those holy men and women who give all they have, and do all they can, that they may gain souls to Christ.

In this connection we should pray for the priesthood and the religious orders that their members may greatly increase. In the Gospel Our Lord tells us to pray the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into His harvest.

The most practical way to assist in this great work is to join the Society of the Propagation of the Faith. This society was founded by Miss Pauline Jaricot in Lyons, France, in 1822. Her purpose was to relieve the distress of foreign missionaries. The members were to contribute one cent a week for the support of these missions. About this time Rev. Father Inglesi of New Orleans thought of establishing a similar society to assist the missions of the United States; but he finally decided to form one society with that of Miss Jaricot. The members enjoy many spiritual privileges, and their obligations are to say a prayer every day for the success of the missions, and contribute five cents a month.

Special members give six dollars a year. (Catholic Encyclopedia—Society of the Propagation of the Faith.)

As a striking example of the power of prayer in the Lay Apostleship, we have the origin of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. M. Bourdoise, whose opinion of Christian education was given during the Catechism on the "Teaching Orders," was so zealous for the Christian instruction of the poor, that he founded an association to pray that God would grant to France the blessing of Christian teachers for the poor. At first the association comprised only ecclesiastics. But one day after M. Bourdoise had preached on the subject, eighty lay persons joined the society. This was on the 15th of March, 1649; and two years later John Baptist De La Salle, the founder of the Brothers, was born. The prayer of M. Bourdoise and his association had been heard. The children of the poor soon had the Christian instruction that they so badly needed ("The Christian Brothers," Mrs. R. F. Wilson).

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. Upon whom did Our Lord promise to build His Church?

2. Give the words of Our Lord's promise regarding the foundation of the Church.

3. How did the Apostles show their zeal in founding the Church?

4. What is meant by the Lay Apostleship?

5. What lesson regarding the salvation of souls can we learn from the parable of the talents?

6. Should we be satisfied with possessing the gift of faith ourselves?

7. Is it possible for busy laymen to work for the salvation of souls?

8. What is the first means to save souls?

9. Why does the Pope include the conversion of sinners among his intentions in prayer?

10. What is the most efficacious prayer for the conversion of sinners? Why so?

11. What does St. James say about those who pray without attention?

12. What do you mean by foreign missions?

EXPOSITION

The second means of doing our share in the lay apostleship, is good example. Example is a powerful incentive to good or evil. A man naturally inclines to do what he sees others do. It is not sufficient to preach, we must practise what we preach. If we would have others lead good lives, we must show them how. We must be able to say with St. Paul: "Be ye followers of me as I also am of Christ" (I Cor., iv, 16). All the faithful are bound to edify their neighbor, in word and act. They ought so to fashion their lives that non-Catholics may see that they practise what they believe. Even the pagans were forced to admire the virtue of the First Christians, especially their charity. "Behold, how they love one another." That was the testi-

mony even of those who hated and persecuted the early Church. And that testimony accounts for the cause of the rapid spread of the Gospel. The edifying lives of the first converts attracted other converts. And thus the endless chain went on till it encircled the whole earth. And the grain of mustard seed planted by Our Lord grew into the great tree of the Catholic Church.

I am afraid, boys, that some Catholics fail to give sufficient attention to the subject of good example. They seem to forget that the fifth commandment strictly forbids giving scandal and bad example, and that Our Lord pronounced a curse on those who scandalize others, especially little children. "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me," said He, "it were better for him that a mill stone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea." . . . "Woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh" (Matt., xviii, 6-7).

Scandal and bad example lead others into sin, and thereby destroy many souls for whom Christ died on the cross. On the other hand, good example leads many souls to heaven. But how can we give good example? We can give good example by keeping the commandments and performing conscientiously the duties of our state of life. Young people edify others by saying their prayers attentively, at home, in school, and in Church. They also give good example by obeying and respecting their parents, teachers,

and other lawful superiors. In a word, they edify others by every good word they utter, and by every good act they perform. And thus our Catholic young folks often convert their Protestant companions. When you have a chance to make a conversion, boys, remember that your good deeds will have a greater effect than your words.

In like manner, no matter what the labor, business, or profession, Catholic men and women can easily edify their non-Catholic friends by strictly adhering to the practice of their faith. Prayer before and after meals, abstaining from meat on Friday and other days of abstinence, regular attendance at Mass on holy days of obligation, and other Catholic duties performed in spite of all human respect, these things convince Protestants and non-Catholics in general, that our faith is real, and that we Catholics really practise what we believe. But if Catholics are negligent in the practice of their religion, if they are ashamed to appear as Catholics in public, instead of attracting others to the true Church, they keep them away.

On one occasion a Protestant young girl after attending one of our convent schools for some time, was asked by some of her Catholic companions why she did not become a Catholic. Her answer was that she did not believe that they believed what they professed. As an instance, she could not understand how they could believe in the real presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, and, at the same time, act so thought-

lessly in church. This example, boys, is only one among many, showing how Protestants are kept outside the Church by the disedifying lives of some Catholics. And surely God will hold such unfaithful Catholics responsible for the loss of these souls.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. Why is good example so powerful a means of saving souls?
2. How does good example help preaching?
3. Are all the faithful bound to edify their neighbor?
4. By what virtue did the First Christians edify the pagans?
5. How did good example contribute to the spread of the Gospel?
6. Give the words of Our Lord condemning those who give scandal or bad example.
7. How can we always give good example?
8. How can young Catholics convert their Protestant companions and careless Catholics?
9. Mention some public Catholic practices that make a good impression on Protestants.
10. What great argument for his religion does a practical Catholic give in his daily life?

REFLECTION

It is related that on one occasion St. Francis of Assisi asked one of his religious to accompany him to the city as he was going to preach. The two silently walked through the streets of the city for some time, and then returned to the monastery. When his companion asked St.

Francis why he had not preached, the Saint replied that they had both preached a very good sermon by their edifying behavior.

From this story, boys, you see how important the saints considered good example. It is a subject on which we should frequently examine our conscience, especially when going to confession. If we commit sin in the presence of others, either by word or act, we may cause them to do likewise, and that circumstance increases our guilt. When, on the contrary, our life is good, when we keep the commandments and practise virtue, those who see us are inclined to imitate us. It is in this way we promote the salvation or the loss of souls. The thought of the mere possibility of sending a soul to hell, should surely prevent us from giving bad example.

MEMORY GEMS

1. *"He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a mill stone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea."* . . .

2. *"Woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh" (Matt., xviii, 6-7).*

3. *"Be ye followers of me as I also am of Christ" (I Cor., iv, 16).*

4. *We must pray for our neighbor, give him good example, and help him in his temporal and spiritual wants.*

5. *Our Lord expects us to utilize the priceless gift of faith to the greatest possible advantage for ourselves and others.*

THE LAY APOSTLESHIP

PART II

EXPOSITION

Prayer and good example, as we have seen, are very efficacious in the great work of the Lay Apostleship. But they are somewhat passive and interior; whereas, many needs of the Church require much external activity. The poverty, the ignorance, and the misery of mankind are a constant source of anxiety to our Catholic Clergy. Actuated by the principle of brotherly love, their heart goes out to suffering humanity. They know that it is not sufficient to tell the poor and the suffering to be good. They must do something to relieve their suffering. But they can do but little without the cooperation of the faithful. They may plan, organize, and otherwise exert their influence; but it all goes for naught unless Catholic laymen, especially young men and young women, are willing to give some of their time and means to the work. To realize their obligations in this respect Catholics should often recall the saying of Our Lord, that the poor will be always with us, and that at the Day of Judgment the kingdom of heaven will be given only to those who will have fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and exercised their charity in the other corporal and spiritual works of mercy as far as they were able.

Man is a social being. God made him so. He cannot stand aloof from the rest of society. In giving Eve to Adam, the Creator said: "It is not good for man to be alone" (Gen., ii, 18). He is then bound to interest himself in what concerns his fellow men. In the Catholic Church we find this interest manifesting itself in the Communion of Saints, and in that grand bond of charity which unites all the faithful under one head. It is related that the First Christians sold whatever property they had and gave the price to the Apostles for the relief of the poor. Here we have an example for the spiritual and the charitable organizations since established in the Church. And there are many such. Not to speak of the League of the Sacred Heart, the Sodalities of the Most Blessed Virgin, the League of the Most Blessed Sacrament, the Holy Name Society, and other purely spiritual associations, we have the St. Vincent de Paul Society with its many activities, the Knights of Columbus which does so much to keep Catholics united and to benefit their fellow men, and other societies especially organized to meet the particular wants of a parish.

Young boys, it is true, are excluded from many of these societies. But they can join sodalities and confraternities suited to their age, and whose object is both devotional and charitable. As an example, there is "The Sodality of Our Lady," founded by the Society of Jesus, whose aim is to foster in its members devotion towards

the Blessed Virgin, and, as far as possible, to sanctify their neighbor, and to relieve his bodily wants. Branches, or sections, of this sodality are to be found in many parishes under the immediate direction of the pastor.

Then again, "The Archconfraternity of the Holy Infant Jesus" should appeal to all Catholic boys and girls, as its great object is to pray that the blessing of Christian education may be enjoyed by all. This Archconfraternity being under the direction of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, all their pupils should take a special interest in it by subscribing, and getting others to subscribe for the "Little Messenger of the Divine Infant"; and also by performing the pious practices recommended to the members.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. Mention some needs of the Church that require external activity.
2. How do the poverty and the ignorance of men affect the Catholic Clergy?
3. What assistance do they require in relieving the sufferings of the poor?
4. What saying of Our Lord should encourage the laity to help the poor?
5. Why is every one bound to take an interest in his fellow men?
6. How does the Church manifest this interest?
7. Name some of the spiritual societies of the Church.

8. Name some Catholic societies, whose object is to relieve the wants of the body as well as those of the soul.

9. What particular societies are suitable for boys?

EXPOSITION

That you may the better understand the necessity for Catholic societies and why the Clergy are so anxious to get young men and young women to join them, you have merely to think of the spiritual dangers to which many of our Catholic people are exposed. In this country there are about three million Catholic children, but only one-half attend a parish school and receive religious instruction. As a consequence, many of these children are lost to the faith. Rev. Father Garesché, S. J., of St. Louis (Catholic Education Convention, 1917), tells us that throughout the country, out of 100,000 children attending Protestant Vacation Bible Schools, 25,000 are Catholics. These schools are taught by a Society of about 2,000 Protestant young men and young women who are willing to sacrifice a part of their vacation for what they consider a noble work. And they certainly teach our Catholic young men and young women a lesson of zeal and devotedness. We have, it is true, some Catechist and Sunday School associations; but they are only a drop in the bucket compared to the needs of our children. Father Garesché shows that there are at least 500,000 Catholic children who are greatly in need of instruction

during vacation, and that we require an army of young men and young women to organize Catholic vacation schools. If such schools be not required in every town or parish, they are an absolute necessity in many.

Another great want in our larger cities especially, is a number of volunteers sufficiently large to take charge of the Catholic delinquents who are brought before the Juvenile Court. These children are guilty of some petty offence or other, which, under wise Catholic influence, might easily be corrected. But if there be no one to take an interest in them, or to vouch for their future conduct, they are sent to the house of correction. And this disgrace is often the beginning of their criminal career and loss of faith.

Besides Sunday Schools, Vacation Catechism Classes, and the Juvenile Court attendance, there are many other good works calling for zealous volunteers. Assisting Catholic emigrants, contributing to the support of Catholic hospitals, orphan asylums and protectories, helping to organize Catholic working boys' clubs, promoting by word and example the circulation of Catholic literature, and assisting the Pastor and Priests in the various activities of one's parish—these good works are surely ample to meet the abilities and the tastes of all our Catholic young men and young women.

The organization, boys, to which I would call your special attention, is the Society of St.

Vincent de Paul. It was founded in 1833, by Professor Ozanam and seven students of the Sorbonne for the relief of the Parisian poor. Its aim was not merely alms, but especially spiritual assistance. Its activities include parish conferences, teaching Catechism, homes for orphans, visiting hospitals and prisons, care of immigrants, and relief work in general. Pope Gregory XVI, Pius IX, and Leo XIII granted many precious indulgences to the members, their benefactors, the poor assisted, and the fathers and mothers, and wives of the members. It was first established in the United States at St. Louis, in 1845. It has a membership of over 12,000 in this country, and 100,000 throughout the world. This Society approaches about the nearest to the fulfillment of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Its members literally feed the hungry, clothe the naked, harbor the harborless, instruct the ignorant, comfort the sorrowful, visit the sick, and bury the dead. Their activities are as boundless as the great precept of charity itself. Their only limitation is insufficiency of membership. Although well organized in many cities and parishes, they do not increase so rapidly as is to be desired. Here is where our ambitious Catholic young men and young women can do something truly heroic by rescuing the poor and miserable from their unhappy condition, and preparing them for the better life to come. There is no better way for our Catholic laity to contribute a very large share to the Lay Apostleship of the Church.

To attain the greatest success in the Lay Apostleship there must be Catholic energy and Catholic unity. The Church has always had her martyrs; but she has also had her crusaders. There are times when prayer alone will suffice. But there are also times when a Catholic must defend, by word and act, the faith that is in him. When heresy, bigotry, and the devil conspire against the truth, Catholics must present a bold front. When the interests of the Church are at stake, when her institutions are assailed, it is the business of the laity, no less than that of the clergy, to unite in strong defence of their civil and religious rights.

In the history of the Church even in modern times, we find many noble examples of what can be done by Catholic energy and Catholic unity. By the principle of Catholic unity the great Liberator, Daniel O'Connell, emancipated millions of Catholics from religious persecution. Unity and energy were the weapons by which the indomitable Windthurst shattered the power of Bismarck and freed his Catholic brethren of Germany. Latin America recalls with gratitude the leadership and the martyrdom of Garcia Moreno, by which he won their religious freedom. Here in our own country, unbiased non-Catholics, as well as Catholics, revere the memory of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, to whose energy we are greatly indebted for that priceless boon of freedom of conscience. And what a noble example of fearless activity in defence of Mother

Church is exhibited in the life of the great Montalembert! Liberty of teaching—the freedom to impart Catholic truth—that was his great objective; and at a time when, as he himself tells us, to profess or defend the Catholic faith, one had to face marked unpopularity. But he reckoned not the difficulties nor personal sufferings. "We are the sons of the Crusaders," he told his fellow Frenchmen; "and we shall never yield to the sons of Voltaire!"

From the example of these and many other illustrious Catholic laymen, you may learn the great good that can be accomplished by wise leadership and united effort. "A zealous and enlightened laity," says Cardinal Gibbons, "is the glory of the Christian Church." While few of you boys will ever have the opportunity of becoming O'Connells or Carrolls, still many of you, in your own limited circle, on account of your superior education, will have a chance to become leaders in defence of Mother Church. And when that occasion presents itself, beware of indifference and liberalism. Always remember that error is error, no matter how finely glossed over, or from whom it comes; and that truth is truth, and can stand the light. Shun the so-called Catholic who would compromise between God and the devil; and who is interested in the work of the Church only when he hears the undertaker in the corridor.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. Why are Catholic societies so necessary?
2. How many Catholic children attend parish schools?
3. What lesson may we learn from Protestant vacation schools?
4. What is the Juvenile Court?
5. Besides teaching Catechism and attending the Juvenile Court, mention some other good works calling for Catholic volunteers.
6. Name three Catholic lay associations.
7. What is the object of the Knights of Columbus?
8. Describe the principal activities of St. Vincent de Paul Society.
9. Name two laymen of modern times who distinguished themselves in defence of the Church.
10. What praise does Cardinal Gibbons bestow on our zealous laymen?

REFLECTION

"If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ," says St. Paul, "let him be anathema (accursed)" (I Cor., xvi, 22). But that threat is unnecessary, boys, for the good Christian. He knows that Christ hath first loved us, and that, notwithstanding our many offences, He still loves us with an infinite love. And St. John tells us that the test of our love of God, is the love of our neighbor. "If any man say I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar" (I John, iv, 20).

To love our neighbor is especially to love his soul. It is to wish him eternal happiness, and to do all we can to help him to attain it. To save souls, to preserve them from the fire of hell, is the strongest proof that we love our neighbor. To save souls ought to be the great business of life. It was to save souls that Our Lord came down from heaven. It was to save souls that He established His Church. It was to save souls that the saints, the religious, the clergy of every age and clime, made so many sacrifices, and still make them, even suffering martyrdom itself.

And now, my dear boys, permit me to ask what are you going to do about it? What are you doing about it now? You know that there are many souls around you, Catholics, as well as non-Catholics, that are in danger of being lost. Are you doing anything to save them? I have told you that you are bound to labor in the Lay Apostleship, and I have given you the means to do so. Your age is no excuse. Young as you are, you can still pray. You can give good example. You can do little acts of charity, make small donations to the poor and suffering. And as you grow into manhood, you can join the many spiritual and corporal activities of the Church. Do not stand aloof like the indifferent or lukewarm Catholic, who is so busy saving his own soul, and incidentally his own body, that he has no time to think of others. Such Catholics should remember that St. James promises that he who saves one soul, will save his own and cover a multitude of sins. "He who causeth a sinner to be

converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins" (James, v, 20).

In a word, boys, be zealous, but prudent. Be ambitious, yes, very ambitious, to extend the knowledge and love of your religion. As far as your condition will permit, see that the suffering members of Christ are relieved. But do not undertake too much. Do not join too many societies. Make a wise selection of one or more that will facilitate your spiritual advancement, and afford you sufficient opportunity to help the poor.

Above all, beware of pride and self-interest. Let your works of charity be done for God. When they cannot be concealed, admit the fact in all humility and modesty. But never forget the following injunction of Our Lord: "When thou doest an alms deed, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Amen I say to you they have received their reward.

"But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.

"That thy alms may be in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret, will repay thee" (Matt., vi, 2, 3, 4).

NOTE.—Before finishing this lesson on "The Lay Apostleship," the teacher should remind the pupils that, while it is very meritorious to be an apostle in the world, the advantages accruing to their neighbor, as well as themselves, by leaving the world and becoming a religious, are incomparably greater.

REVIEW

1. Name three means by which the Catholic Laity can work for the salvation of souls.

2. State three corporal works of mercy, and also three of the spiritual.

3. Show how the parable of the talents may be applied to the gift of faith.

4. Mention some advantages of belonging to the League of the Sacred Heart.

5. Why are scandal and bad example so displeasing to God?

6. In what good works ought the laity to assist the pastors and priests of the Church?

7. What is the object of the Holy Name Society?

8. What are the two obligations of the members of the Society of the Propagation of the Faith?

9. How can one do more for his neighbor by becoming a religious than by remaining in the world?

STORY

St. Martin of Tours giving half his mantle to a poor man.

FRUIT

If your vocation be to live in the world, resolve to become a zealous member of one or more of the great charity organizations of the Church.

SYNOPSIS

The Lay Apostleship.

- Introduction.
  - Questions on last lesson.
  - Church founded.
  - Zeal of Apostles and First Christians.
  - Parable of the Talents.
- Prayer.
  - Very efficacious means.
  - Fervent and persevering.
  - Particular intention.
- Good Example.
  - Strict obligation.
  - How given.
  - Effect on non-Catholics.
- Catholic Societies.
  - Spiritual benefit of members.
  - Help the poor and ignorant in body and soul.
- Individual Effort.
  - In defence of the faith.
  - Guarding Catholic Institutions.
  - Examples from history.
- Fruit:—Resolve to join some Catholic Societies.

LESSON XI

OBJECTIONS AND OBSTACLES

PART I

INTRODUCTION

1. What is meant by the Lay Apostleship?

2. What is the most efficacious prayer for the conversion of sinners?

3. Why is bad example so great an evil?

4. Why are prayer and good example not sufficient as means in the lay apostleship?

5. To what works of charity do the members of St. Vincent de Paul Society devote themselves?

All good Catholics show respect and admiration for religious. They regard them as very dear friends of God. They cheerfully contribute to their support, asking in return to be remembered in their prayers. Again, you will frequently hear old men express regret that they declined the invitation to embrace the religious life. They now see, but all too late, the vanity of the world and the joys of religion. From their experience, from the objections and the obstacles that decided their choice of state, young people can learn some practical lessons. Let us, therefore, examine the principal objections to the religious life and the secular priesthood.

EXPOSITION

Who are invited to the higher life? How can I know whether I am invited or not? These are very important questions especially for the young. You have heard, boys, that vocations are freely chosen, but providentially given by God.

Many imagine that priests and religious are a select class specially chosen for God's service to the exclusion of all others. This is a great mistake. Priests and religious are, indeed, a select class; but they become such only on entering their state of life. While God gives the qualifications and the graces necessary for the success of the vocation, it is the individual, himself, who makes the choice. Providence directs all things to their appointed end, but it does not interfere with man's free will. The invitation or call to the religious state is given to all. St. Basil says: "To embrace the evangelical mode of life is the privilege of every one." But, according to St. Thomas, only a few desire to avail themselves of this privilege. God presents the invitation to all, but leaves each one free to accept or to decline as he wishes.*

God, as it were, speaks to the soul after this manner: "My dear child, I would be much

*NOTE.—Rev. Father Cassilly, S. J., says that, "while external or internal impediments may prevent some from hearkening to Christ's call, and their own will may deter others, His invitation, *of itself*, does not exclude any; it is general, ever waiting for those able and willing to accept it." ("What Shall I Be?")

pleased to have you join my special friends and help me to save souls. That is the higher life. Its advantages are very great, and its reward in heaven will be far greater than that of the ordinary Christian. But I do not command you. You are free to remain in the world if you so desire." Thus we see, boys, that a man's vocation, after all, is, in a great measure, decided by himself. God makes the offer; but man accepts or declines as he wishes.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. How do good Catholics regard religious?
2. What regret do some aged Catholics express regarding their vocation?
3. How can young people learn from their mistakes?
4. How do vocations originate?
5. When are priests and religious to be regarded as a select class?
6. According to St. Basil, who may embrace the religious life?
7. Who then, in a great measure, decides on a person's vocation?

EXPOSITION

Why do so few accept the invitation to become a priest or a religious? St. Chrysostom gives the answer. He says: "The reason all do not take Christ's advice is because they do not wish to do so." They either do not realize that each one, individually, is invited, or else they

have some strong objection. Those, of course, who have some physical or mental impediment, or whose condition prevents them from leaving the world, are, in the designs of Providence, excluded from the religious life. But every one else is invited.

The objections to entering the religious life are chiefly three. The first is the fear of not being able to keep the vow of chastity. The majority of people think that they are unable to observe that counsel and, therefore, prefer the married state.

It is related in the Holy Scripture that the disciples once asked Our Lord if it were not better to remain unmarried than to marry. Our Lord said to them: "All men take not this word. . . . He that can take, let him take it" (Matt., xix, 11-12). The Fathers of the Church tell us that Our Lord meant that the practice of this counsel is difficult; but that he who is willing to make the sacrifice, will obtain all the necessary graces. God cannot fail to do His part. Therefore the fear of not being able to keep the vow of chastity, should not be an obstacle to those who are thinking of becoming religious. In case of serious doubt, a person should accept the decision of a wise and prudent confessor.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. What reason does St. Chrysostom give for so few entering religion?
2. Who are excluded from the invitation?
3. What is the first great objection to the religious life?

4. What question did the disciples ask Our Lord regarding marriage?

5. How did He answer them?

6. How do the Fathers of the Church explain this answer?

7. Why then should the fear of not keeping the vow of chastity not be an obstacle to entering religion?

8. What should a person do in case of serious doubt?

EXPOSITION

Another great obstacle to the religious life is the love of riches, and, therefore, the fear of not being able to keep the vow of poverty. As boys advance in age and knowledge, they learn that the ambition to make money is quite common. They soon perceive that men labor for money, that they study how to make money, that they marry for money, and, in fact, that some do not scruple to commit crime for money. The cause of this extraordinary love of riches does not long remain hidden to the inquiring young mind. Young folks soon understand that with riches come worldly power, honor, and pleasure. And they too would become rich. Hence the impatience with which they long for the day when they can enter business. They can see only the successes of business. They think not of its many sad failures.

Now, boys, for those who are brought up without a knowledge of religion, the love of earthly goods is quite natural. But with Catholic young

men the case is different. They know that riches are an accident in life. Some are rich; but the great majority are poor or in moderate circumstances. Catholics are taught that an inordinate love of riches is sinful; that it is severely condemned by Our Lord. "How hardly shall they that have riches, enter into the Kingdom of God," says He (Mark, x, 23); and in another place: "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt., xix, 24). And again, "Woe to you that are rich, for you have your consolation" (Luke, vi, 24).

The great evil of money is that men become attached to it and neglect the service of God. Catholics are warned that the rich are only the custodians of money; that God will demand a strict account of the use they make of their riches. It has been said that the salvation of the rich greatly depends on alms-giving and on the prayers of the poor. Father Faber asks, "What are the rich meant for?" In answer he tells us that the rich are meant to be the prey of the poor; and that he alone is happy in his riches, who allows the poor to prey upon him. Whether the poor are deserving or undeserving, it matters not. The rich have no reason to complain. Their salvation depends on their charity. It is only through their alms that they may hope to hear at the last day that consoling sentence: "Come ye blessed of My Father and possess the kingdom prepared for you; for when I was hungry you gave Me to eat; when I was thirsty you gave Me

to drink; when I was naked you clothed Me; and when I was in prison you visited Me" (Matt., xxv, 34-36).

The vow of poverty, as practised in the religious life, cuts off at once all the evils and temptations experienced both in the acquisition and the possession of riches. Religious are voluntarily poor. In renouncing all earthly goods they are freed from the cares and anxieties that always accompany riches. They make this sacrifice in accordance with the advice of Our Lord, and in order that they may be free to devote all their energies to His service.

A great objection for some people is the love of independence, or their own will, which religious renounce by the vow of obedience. These people believe that they could not keep the vow of obedience. It is strange that Catholic young men should think it so difficult to observe the vow of obedience. In every good Catholic family children are taught the fourth commandment and are trained to obey from their childhood up. In Catholic schools, as you know, obedience is an absolute law. Catholic youth know full well that it is God's will that they obey their parents, teachers, and lawful superiors in everything except sin. In like manner, in making the vow of obedience, a person resigns his own will to that of God in the person of His representative. In obeying his lawful superiors he knows that he obeys God Himself. The fourth commandment is a positive command; while the vow of obedi-

ence is a matter of choice. Religious, it is true, make a great sacrifice by renouncing their own will. But they are more than amply repaid by knowing that, in obeying, they are constantly doing what is most pleasing to God. When they appear before God to be judged they can justly refer to their superiors as greatly responsible for their lives.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. What is the second great obstacle to entering religion?

2. What means do men use to obtain riches?

3. How is the love of riches shown in the young?

4. Why are men attached to riches?

5. How should Catholics regard riches?

6. Give a text of Scripture showing how Our Lord condemned love of riches. Give another.

7. What is the great evil of money?

8. How does Father Faber regard the rich?

9. Upon what does the salvation of the rich greatly depend?

10. At the last judgment what will be the consolation of those who shall have practised almsgiving?

11. How does the vow of poverty secure religious against the love of riches?

12. What two other advantages does poverty give religious?

13. Give some reasons why the fear of not keeping the vow of obedience should not prove an obstacle to the religious life.

14. Whom do religious obey?

15. What great consolation have they in obeying their superiors?

REFLECTION

You have just heard, my dear boys, the reason why the fear of not being able to observe the vows of religion should not prevent any one from becoming a religious. As you learned in the catechism on the religious life, the sacrifice is great, but the advantages and the reward are much greater. If then any of you are thinking of accepting Our dear Lord's invitation, don't hesitate on account of the sacrifice called for by the observance of the vows. With God's grace you can observe them as well as so many others who have gone before you. In fact, you practise the virtues of the vows every day. In keeping the sixth commandment you practise chastity. You practise poverty when you are poor in spirit, that is, when you are detached from riches, and submit to the privations of your state in life. And you practise obedience in keeping the fourth commandment. The difference is a matter of degree. The religious places himself under a greater obligation to practise these virtues in a higher degree than people in the world. Of course, a religious who violates these virtues, commits a greater sin on account of his vows; but his merit for practising them is greater for the same reason.

PART II

EXPOSITION

Foolish parents and false friends frequently prevent young people from entering religion. Through selfishness and natural love they interfere with the designs of God Himself. Under a thousand and one pretexts they persuade their children to remain in the world. In acting thus they assume a very great responsibility. They will be held accountable for all the souls that might have been saved by their sons and daughters as religious. Even in this life such parents are sometimes punished by the wicked life or early death of their child.

When parents, without a just and grave reason, refuse their consent or otherwise interfere with their children's choice of a state of life, the latter are not bound to follow their parents' wishes. That is the teaching of the Doctors of the Church. Many of the saints were opposed and even persecuted by their parents in order to prevent them from becoming religious. But in these severe trials they never forgot that "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me" (Matt., x, 37). After resisting his father's tender appeal for three hours, St. Alphonsus said: "Dear father, I see that you suffer for my sake; but God has called me, and

I am determined to follow His voice." When St. Columbanus was leaving home to enter a monastery, he was obliged to leap over his mother who had thrown herself on the floor at the door, in order to prevent his departure. Thus it was with St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Francis Xavier, St. Philip Neri, St. Stanislaus, and others. They were obliged to leave home and parents without permission.

When children know that their parents will not oppose them, it is proper to ask their consent; but not otherwise. In the latter case, secrecy and prayer are the two rules to be followed. No matter how great the opposition or even persecution, they should not be discouraged. God will always assist His chosen ones. In the lives of the saints we find many examples of God's wonderful intervention in enabling his servants to overcome the opposition of parents and others in embracing their vocation.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. Have parents the right to select their children's vocation?

2. Are children bound to obey them in this respect? Explain.

3. What account will parents have to render to God for opposing their children's vocation?

4. How does God sometimes punish them in this life?

5. Mention one or two saints whose vocation was opposed by their parents.

6. By what sentence of Our Lord were these saints strengthened in their decision?

REFLECTION

Some parents find this doctrine rather hard; but it is the teaching of the Fathers of the Church. Parents must remember that their children came from God, and that He has a perfect right to call them to Himself. And you, my dear boys, must never forget the words of Christ: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me" (Matt., x, 37). If you wish to belong to God, if you wish to be His friend for all eternity, you must love Him above all things, even above your parents.

EXPOSITION

Neither youth nor want of worldly experience is a valid objection to entering the service of God. Some say it is. They argue that a vocation should be tested; that the aspirant should be exposed to the temptations of the world in order to acquire experience. But these reasons are false. Why expose a young person to temptation when there is such danger of yielding? Why should he experiment in worldly affairs, when his life is to be separated from the world? Who would think of telling a young man to become a shoemaker or a tailor as a preparation for his life-work as a doctor or a lawyer? Why

then act so differently in regard to the religious life, the greatest of all professions? St. Thomas, and the other doctors of the Church teach that youth is no obstacle, and that to keep children in the world in order to acquire experience is a device of the devil to destroy vocations.

Vocations are often lost through delays. There may sometimes be special circumstances which prevent a young person from carrying out his good intention immediately. But, in general, when a person has decided to enter the religious life or the secular priesthood, he should act at once. The invitation may be offered today, but may be withheld tomorrow. Those who lightly postpone accepting may be deprived of the necessary grace altogether. In fact, experience proves that the great majority of those, who, for some apparent reason or other, remain in the world after having settled on their vocation, change their mind and give up the intention of entering religion. The pleasures of the world, the seemingly joyful lives and advice of their friends, and even the happiness of good Christians, all conspire to make the young aspirant hesitate. And he who hesitates is easily vanquished, or turned aside from his original purpose. A Missionary Priest (Vincentian) affirms that only one out of twenty of such vocations is secured. Delay is the last resource of the devil. When he cannot otherwise prevent a vocation, he usually succeeds by causing delays. A vocation to the higher life is so delicate a plant that the least exposure to a

worldly atmosphere may cause it to wither and die. Here is the advice of St. Jerome: "Make haste, I beseech you, and rather cut than loosen the rope by which your bark is bound fast to the land."

Some are prevented from entering religion by the fear of making a mistake. They look upon it as a disgrace to enter an order and then return to the world. They forget that when a person enters a religious order he is placed on trial. That is the object of what is called the "Novitiate." For a year or longer the aspirant is tested as regards his dispositions and as to whether or not he be qualified to lead the life he has chosen. If not suited to the work, he is advised to withdraw. If he himself, for valid reasons, change his intention, he is entirely free to return to the world. As he was not bound to accept the invitation, neither is he bound to remain, if he conscientiously feel he has made a mistake. Instead of being a disgrace, it is a matter of honor and prudence to give up a work, which, though begun with the best intention, it is found impossible to accomplish.

There is, however, disgrace and sometimes even scandal, in leaving an order through want of generosity in observing its rules and regulations, or through a desire to satisfy one's passions. In the history of religious orders we read of many examples, including Martin Luther as one of the most notorious. They began well, accepted the invitation, but were wanting in perseverance.

But such examples need not prevent any one from entering religion. When we compare them with the thousands of others who did persevere and became great saints, and the glory of the Church, there is no reason for fear or discouragement. God's grace is all-powerful; and when He gives a vocation, He also gives the means to make it a success.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. Why should young people not postpone entering religion?

2. What does St. Thomas call such delays?

3. Give the answer to those who say that a vocation should be tested by the temptations of the world.

4. What does experience show regarding those who delayed entering religion after having decided on their vocation?

5. Is it always a disgrace to leave an order? Why not?

6. What is the object of the Novitiate?

7. When is scandal given by renouncing one's vocation?

8. Mention some examples.

9. Why should these examples not discourage one from becoming a religious?

REFLECTION

Some of our Catholics are too ready to take scandal. When they see or hear of a priest or a religious doing wrong, instead of being scandalized they ought to pity and pray for him.

And, if in their power, they should try to help him out of his trouble. The great King David sinned; St. Peter denied Our Lord; and the early life of St. Augustine was very sinful. Therefore, boys, you should not be surprised if a priest or a religious fall into sin. Nor should you, like some Protestants and others, condemn the priesthood or religious orders because of the sins of one or more members. Above all, such things must have no influence whatever in deciding your vocation.

REVIEW

1. How can young people learn from the mistakes of others in choosing their state of life?
2. May any one become a priest or a religious?
3. By whom is a man's vocation decided?
4. Why don't all accept Our Lord's invitation?
5. What did Our Lord mean when He said: "All men take not this word. . . . He that can take, let him take it"? (Matt., ix, 11-12).
6. Give a text of Scripture condemning the love of money.
7. Mention one or two earthly advantages of the vow of poverty.
8. State the rule to be followed regarding parents and vocation.
9. Give the text about loving father or mother more than God.
10. Why should young people not remain in the world in order to acquire experience before entering religion?

STORY

The Rev. Father Lelen quotes from "A Mother's Letters," a striking example of how parents are sometimes punished for opposing the vocation of their children.

A young man asked his mother's permission to enter the seminary. She replied: "I would rather see you dead than a priest." So the young man became a medical student; but soon became addicted to drink. When his money was all spent, he tried to steal some from his mother. When she tried to prevent him, he struck her in the temple and killed her.

FRUIT

Pray for will-power to overcome all obstacles to your vocation.

MEMORY GEMS

1. "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me" (Matt., x, 37).

2. "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt., xix, 24).

3. "The reason all do not take Christ's advice (to enter the higher life) is because they do not wish to do so" (St. Chrysostom).

4. "Our Lord's invitation is ever waiting for those able and willing to accept it" (Father Cassilly, S. J.).

SYNOPSIS

Objections and Obstacles.

- Introduction.
  - Questions on last lesson.
  - Mistakes of others.
- Three Great Objections.
  - Fear of not keeping vow of Chastity.
  - Fear of not keeping vow of Poverty.
  - Fear of not keeping vow of Obedience.
- Opposition of Parents and Friends.
  - Their objections and advice not always to be heeded.
  - Many saints thus opposed.
  - Love of God above that of parents.
- False Reasons.
  - Youth and want of experience.
  - Unnecessary delays.
  - Fear of making a mistake.

Fruit:—Pray for will-power to overcome all obstacles to your vocation.

LESSON XII

THE MEANS TO CHOOSE WELL

PART I

INTRODUCTION

1. How do vocations originate?

2. Why do so few accept the invitation to the higher life?

3. Should the fear of not keeping the vows prevent one from entering the religious life?

4. Why is the love of money so great an evil?

5. Have parents the right to select the vocation of their children? Why not?

6. Is a young man excused from following his vocation on account of the opposition of his parents? Explain.

7. When a person has decided upon his vocation, why is it dangerous to delay?

The fact that everybody is free to choose his state of life, entails a very grave responsibility. So much depends upon his choice that it should be made with the greatest care and attention. While leaving us free, God wishes us, at the same time, to choose according to the principles of faith and reason. No one can expect Him to bless a giddy or haphazard choice. It follows, therefore, that every one should select the best means to attain success in this all-important matter. He who wishes the end, must also wish the

means. "To choose well," says St. Augustine, "is to choose according to the light of reason, and especially of faith, in what state we can best secure the end for which we are created."

EXPOSITION

According to the Doctors of the Church, the first great means of knowing one's vocation is fervent, earnest prayer. When Cardinal Newman was in search of religious truth, he had recourse to God through the tender verses of that beautiful hymn, "Lead, Kindly Light,—Lead Thou me on." Although one of the greatest minds of the 19th Century, he felt the need of God's help in coming to a decision. And thus it was with all the great saints, doctors, and learned men of the Church. They all felt the need of God's light. St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventure said that they had learned more in humble, fervent prayer, at the foot of the crucifix, than from men or books. "If any of you want wisdom," says St. James (1, 5), "let him ask of God, . . . and it shall be given him." Young people want wisdom, especially when about to select their state of life. The persuasion of parents, the advice of false friends, the attractions of the world, and their own passions, all combine to darken their understanding and lead them astray. It is then they should call upon God to enlighten their mind, and to strengthen their will. They can truly say to Our Lord: "As we know not what to do, we can only turn our eyes to Thee"

(II Paral., xx, 12). "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts, ix, 6).

But in order that their prayer may be effective, young people must pray with faith and confidence. They should often recall this promise of Our Lord: "Ask, and you shall receive" (John, xvi, 24). It is also necessary to keep themselves in the state of grace, remembering that "The continual prayer of the just man availeth much" (James, v, 16); and again, "The way of the wicked is darksome: they know not where they fall" (Prov., iv, 19). Yes; God, in His mercy, hears the prayers even of the wicked; but not so readily as those of the just. Consequently, young people who wish God to help them in making their choice of a state of life, should pray much, receive the sacraments often, and have a tender devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. By what principles should a person be guided in choosing his vocation?
2. What do you mean by the principles of faith?
3. What is the first means to choose well?
4. Why is prayer so necessary?
5. Mention a great example among the doctors of the Church showing the necessity of prayer.
6. Why do young people need wisdom in deciding on their vocation?
7. On what conditions will their prayer be effective?

8. How can they keep themselves in the state of grace?

9. What particular devotion should they have?

REFLECTION

I know, boys, that this is not the first time you have heard of the necessity of prayer. Every good Catholic regards prayer as the support of his life. Our Lord knew the great need we would have of it; hence the many times He speaks of it in the Gospel. He even tells us to pray always; that is, to make our daily lives a constant prayer. Well, follow His advice, and pray every day that you may choose your vocation in a manner most pleasing to Him.

EXPOSITION

The second means to choose well is to give the matter serious consideration. A matter of such importance requires careful reflection. "With desolation is all the land made desolate because there is none that considereth in his heart" (Jer., xii, 11). The prophet's words were never better applied than to the carelessness of men in selecting their vocation. They have eyes, but see not. They have minds, but they think not. And this is why so many make mistakes. "There is a way that seemeth just to a man," saith the Scripture, "but the ends thereof lead to death" (Prov., xiv, 12).

It is dangerous to consider a vocation only from its worldly advantages or disadvantages.

All states of life are intended to be a preparation for eternity. And that fact must never be lost sight of.

Young people must look at the question of their vocation from the standpoint of faith. How will this choice enable me to attain my last end? Will I be satisfied with it at the hour of my death? Do I make it purely for the honor and glory of God? These are the questions that one should ask himself before coming to a decision.

It is well, of course, to follow the dictates of reason. But reason must be enlightened by faith. The man of the world, the man without religious principles, follows the dictates of reason. In selecting his state of life, or avocation, he considers the best means to reach a temporal success. He examines what others have done, and how they did it. His object being worldly honor, wealth, or pleasure, he does not look beyond time. It is the present and not the future, with which he is concerned. To get the most out of this life is the fullest extent of his ambition.

It is not thus a Catholic should reason. He knows that his end is not to enjoy the goods of this world. He further knows that this life is merely a time of trial, that his true life will be enjoyed in eternity. He has an enlightened conscience which reveals his responsibility for every thought, word, and act of his life. He believes that his future happiness will depend on the way he has served his Creator here on earth. In contrast with the man of the world, his aim is to

lay up treasure in heaven, "where neither rust nor moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matt., vi, 19-20).

Consequently, in making the choice of a vocation, reason, as well as faith, prompts a Catholic to rise above mere earthly advantages, and to select the life-work that will serve him best in attaining his last end. He will prudently take into account his own aptitudes and qualifications, as well as the spiritual advantages and dangers of each state. But whether he choose marriage, the priesthood, or the religious life, will depend solely on which of these states will be the most conducive to his eternal salvation.

MEMORY QUESTIONS

1. What is the second means to choose well?
2. Why is it dangerous to consider a vocation only from its worldly advantages?
3. How far may a person follow the dictates of reason in choosing his vocation?
4. How does a man of the world reason on his avocation?
5. What is his object in life?
6. Why do a Catholic's reasons for selecting his vocation differ from those of a man of the world?
7. What does faith teach him regarding his vocation?
8. How ought he to regard earthly advantages in making his choice?
9. What should be his principal reason in preferring one state to another?

THE MEANS TO CHOOSE WELL

PART II

EXPOSITION

We hear it said, at times, that such a man is more wicked than the devil himself. And why? Because he tempts men to sin by means which the devil cannot employ. The devil has many tricks and snares for tempting men; but he cannot, for instance, give bad advice. For that he requires an agent in human form. And we certainly may call those who give bad advice to the young regarding their vocation, agents of the devil. And, alas! there are many such. Even well-meaning but deluded Catholics, sometimes take part in thus thwarting a vocation. Through bias, prejudice, or ignorance, they advise the young to make a choice which may jeopardize the salvation of many souls. They little think of the responsibility which they assume in acting as counsellors. It must never be forgotten that, according to Father Vermeersch, while the aspirant is free to accept or decline a vocation, the person who advises is not free to advise according to his likes or dislikes. His opinion must come from an enlightened conscience. St. Thomas teaches that even a confessor sins grievously, if he hinder from becoming a religious, one who has a good intention and no impediment.

So you see, boys, there is danger of becoming the victim of bad advice regarding one's vocation. There is nothing in which youth must be more on their guard and use greater care and prudence than in selecting their advisers in reference to their future state. A good counsellor is unbiased, a man of experience, knowledge, and piety, usually a good religious, or one's confessor. When it is a question of the higher life, the advice of parents, friends and the worldly-wise, is of little or no value whatever. Consult with a wise and conscientious man. (Tobias, iv, 19.)

Young people should have few advisers; many would only confuse and distract them. Nor is prolonged deliberation or extensive consultation necessary. After invoking the lights of the Holy Ghost, a reasonable amount of time and advice is all that is required. For a person who is sincere and prudent, the danger of making a mistake is very slight. St. Thomas tells us that even if the religious vocation came from the devil, it ought to be embraced as an excellent counsel given by an enemy.

It is foolish to spend too much time in trying to find out whether one has a vocation or not. There is a general invitation even to the priesthood and the religious life. It is not necessary that an angel repeat the invitation. The point to be examined is whether one is fitted for such or such a state, such or such an order. The three conditions laid down by theologians are a sure guide. If the aspirant have no impediment,

if his intention be good, if he have the necessary fitness of nature and grace, and if he be accepted by a lawful superior, he may rest secure in his vocation. "The choice of a state of life is then a question of will, love of God, and the spirit of detachment and sacrifice" (St. Thomas).

REFLECTION

When you hear, my dear boys, that a vocation is an invitation and not a command, do not imagine that you have little or no responsibility in making your choice. It is true, you can be saved in any state of life; but considering your aptitudes and general qualifications, common sense tells you to choose the state in which you will have the least difficulty in saving your own soul, and doing the most good for the honor and glory of God. Remember that the broad, easy road of pleasure does not lead to heaven. If you are going to heaven, take the sure, straight road of virtue and penance.

Our Lord says: "Enter ye in at the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat.

"How narrow is the gate, and straight is the way that leadeth to life; and few there are that find it" (Matt., vii, 13, 14).

REVIEW

1. Name the three means to choose well.

2. What things are liable to lead young people astray?

3. Give a text of Scripture showing how we should have confidence in prayer.

4. What special devotion will help greatly in selecting one's vocation?

5. When is reason enlightened by faith?

6. How does the object of the good Catholic in this life, differ from that of a man of the world?

7. Is it necessary to deliberate long in order to find out whether one has a particular vocation or not?

STORY

Some years ago a young man on the eve of ordination, told his Bishop that he was in doubt about his vocation. He explained that he had entered the seminary and had pursued his studies because his mother wished him to become a priest. He himself had no great liking for the priesthood nor had he any aversion to it. The Bishop told him to banish his doubt; that he had what is called a mother's vocation; and that he would ordain him without hesitation. The young man took the Bishop's advice, and became a very pious and zealous priest. By a mother's vocation the Bishop meant that his mother had prayed for him.

FRUIT

Ask the Most Blessed Virgin every day to help you to choose well.

SYNOPSIS

The Means to Choose Well.

- **Introduction.**
  - Questions on last lesson.
  - Freedom of choice entails responsibility.
  - Choose according to faith and reason.
- **Prayer.**
  - For light and will-power.
  - Frequent the Sacraments.
  - Devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin.
- **Consideration.**
  - End in view and salvation.
  - Advantages and obligations of different states.
  - Aptitudes and qualifications.
- **Advice.**
  - Few advisers.
  - Counsellor carefully chosen—his qualities.
  - What advice to be rejected as bad.

Fruit:—Ask the Most Blessed Virgin every day to help you to choose well.

A PRAYER TO KNOW ONE'S VOCATION

O my God, thou who art the God of Wisdom and Counsel, who hast put in my heart the sincere wish to please none but Thee and to conform entirely to Thy holy will in the choice of my state of life; grant me, through the intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin, my Mother, and of my holy Patrons, especially Saint Joseph and Saint Aloysius Gonzaga, the grace to know my vocation and to embrace it, so that I may therein labor for Thy glory, work out my salvation, and merit the heavenly reward that Thou hast promised to them who do Thy divine will. Amen.

(Ind., 300 days—Piux X, May 6, 1905.)

Saint John Baptist De La Salle, obtain for me the grace to know the holy will of God in the choice of my vocation.

PRAYER TO OBTAIN CHRISTIAN TEACHERS

O Lord! Who seest the efforts of wicked men to deprive Thee of the souls of children, have pity on Thy people, and deign to multiply the number of Christian teachers. Send laborers into Thy vineyard, fill them with Thy spirit, and increase their fruits. We ask this through the Sacred Heart of Thy Divine Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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